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ELTON ELLIOTT JULIAN MAY GENE DEWEESE

RICHARD GEIS GREGORY BENFORD DARRELL SCHWEITZER

AVRAM DAVIDSON ALEXIS GILLILAND BRAD FOSTER



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## LAST MINUTE SMALL PRESS NOTE

PRINCE VALIANT—AN AMERICAN EPIC  
VOLUME TWO:1938  
By Hal Foster. Ed. by Rick Norwood.  
Manuscript Press  
P.O. Box 1762, Wayne, NJ 07470.

This bedsheet size limited edition of original-size Prince Valiant comic strip series, in full color, is a hell of an impressive effort. The paper stock is...what?—something like heavy cover stock all the way through. This 1500-copy edition is intended to last! And at \$100. per copy is not outlandishly priced.

This volume follows the prince's adventures from 1-1-38 to 12-25-38, the full year. Also included in the back are greeting cards created by Hal Foster and some really fine reproductions of Foster sailing ship paintings.

## Next Issue....

### INTERVIEW: ALGIS BUDRYS

"ADVICE TO A NEW WRITER ON THE CHOICE OF A FIRST WORD-PROCESSOR" BY ALGIS BUDRYS

"HE CAN REMEMBER IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE! THE PHIL DICK PROBLEM! THE PHIL DICK SOLUTION" BY BARRY MALZBERG

PLUS AN AVRAM DAVIDSON ESSAY AND THE COLUMNISTS...

BUT WHY DOES  
GRIFF REALLY  
WANT MY OLD  
ZIP CODE 2



...INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY  
OF ELECTRIC POWER COMPANIES  
SEEKING WORLD CONQUEST...



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### FAMOUS LAST WORDS:

"BUT SURELY THE GOVERNMENT  
CAN'T BREAK ITS OWN LAWS!"

# ALIEN THOUGHTS

## RICHARD E. GEIS

THIS ISSUE IS LATE BECAUSE...

Ah, how I hate to use those words. I have had pride galore in always...always putting out SFR on schedule, always within a very few days of the target of the 25th of the month previous to the official publication month.

But, as I eat raw hubris and find it sour and bitter to the taste, I am consoled that at least it isn't all that late...seven or eight or nine days. Not a tragedy. Not a criminal offense. Still...it ranks my obligation organ.

The reasons for this lateness will have to be covered by the twin cliches of 'professional commitments' and 'family affairs' which demanded, unexpectedly, huge amounts of my time.

Next issue I am sure will be smack on schedule.

AN AWARD, AN AWARD, AN AWARD!

Andy Porter called with good news, and bad news. The bad news first: A. Bertram Chandler, the Australian author best known for his Commander Grimes sf stories, is dead.

The good news he called about was that the reader voting on the SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE Awards has blessed me---for the third year in a row---with the award for Best Fan Writer.

The award it is year, as in the past, is a medal with ribbon, which can be worn if desired, like a military medal. If this keeps on I'll rival a general of the Army with a chest full of awards that waggle and clank as I walk.

I thank all those Geisian enthusiasts who voted for me. Ah 'preciate it.

The other, lesser winners of the SFC Awards were:

Best Novel---THE ANUBIS GATE

By Tim Powers

Best Novella---HER HABILINE HUSBAND

By Michael Bishop

Best Novelette---"Black Air" By Kim

Stanley Robinson

Best Short Story---"The Peacemaker"

By Gardner Dozois

Best Dramatic Presentation---

RETURN OF THE JEDI

Best Pro Editor-Magazines---

Edward L. Ferman

Best Pro Editor-Books---

David Hartwell

Best Pro Artist---Michael Whelan

Best Semi-Prozine---SCIENCE FICTION

CHRONICLE (Andy Porter)

Best Fanzine---FILE 770 (Mike Glyer)

Best Fan Artist---Alexis Gilliland

Most attractive covers-Magazine---

ANALOG SF

Most Attractive Covers-Book---

Ace Books

I'LL CRY FERRARO

So, ol'sleepy-eyes Mondale has apparently succumbed to the nagging of the N.O.W. and, in true liberal wimp fashion, picked as his v.p. running mate Geraldine Ferraro.

He has caved in to the largest special interest group. He has been pussy-whipped.

That is the gut-level perception he will have to cope with in an increasingly older, conservative electorate.

I admire Ferraro. I think she's got more guts and decisiveness than Mondale, and I'd vote for her as

president over Reagan. But if Mondale wins, he will be president, and I don't like him or trust him.

Reagan/Bush or Mondale/Ferraro is a lousy choice, but the only one we have, realistically. So I'll vote for Reagan and hope he doesn't do too much damage to the republic while he lives. Mondale would wreck the place.

You've got to remember that the president in the next four years will likely appoint four or five new justices to the Supreme Court. And these new justices---basically conservative or liberal---will set the course of the Supreme Court for another generation or so.

THE HOORS WILL WIN. THEY ALWAYS HAVE.

The Portland City Council has made another stab at controlling street prostitution. They're going to spend \$96,000 on welfare and services for prostitutes who want to quit the life and go straight.

And at the same time they're trying to make it more difficult and expensive for a customer to approach a streetwalker.

According to state law a prostitution arrest can only be made after the parties have agreed on a sex act and a price.

The Council wants to make it a crime to "linger in or near any street or public place, repeatedly circling in an area in a motor vehicle, or repeatedly beckoning to, attempting to stop or stopping, or contacting pedestrians or motor vehicles."

Well now. That sounds too vague to me, to be constitutional. It would prohibit taking polls, it would prohibit gathering signatures for referendums, and would probably even prohibit Santa Claus from soliciting contributions to



charities at Christmas time. Why, it might even prevent politicians from going out to 'press the flesh' of voters. Umm...well, maybe the new law should be passed and used; politicians are prostitutes, after all.

#### SNATCHING DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY DEPT.

That's Walter Mondale for you, displaying such abysmal judgement by wanting Bert Lance, the corruption symbol of the Carter administration, to be the official head of the Democrat party, and then, when the Demo officials and rank and file objected to Lance, naming good ol' boy Bert to be his presidential campaign manager.

Thus sleepy-eyes (and sleepy-brained) Mondale undercut his good-publicity of a few days ago when he chose Geraldine Ferraro as his v.p. running mate, shifted the attention from Ferraro and put himself in the stewing pot Jackson and Hart had him in for a while during the primaries: that he was a party-line, promise-anything, old-fashioned politician bereft of new ideas and imagination. Now Mondale is wearing the Bad Judge-ment albatross around his neck as well, and telling his fellow democrats and all Americans he is going to bring back the Carter administration. Will Kissinger be Sec. of State? Why should the American people vote for the Carter administration now after having kicked it out of office four years ago?

One more pratfall like this and Mondale might not get the nomination. A lot of delegates must be having second thoughts.

What would you say to a Hart-Ferraro ticket?

#### ECONOMIC SCIENCE FICTION OR SPECULATIONS ABOUT MONEY

I'm going to build a greenhouse next spring-summer when, if events transpire (or expire) as I think they will, I'll have oodles of time to putter around the house fixing the things and painting the things I see now should be done.

In the next ten months (or less) however, my mission, and I have accepted it, is to put aside as much moola as it is allowed.

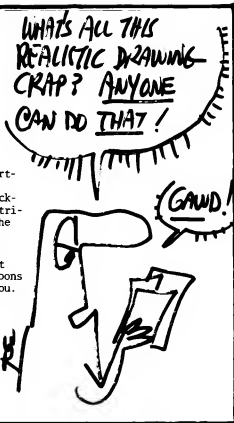
Because, brethren, I see doom approaching! Oh, Yes! Doom. D-O-O-M! The end of an era, the collapse of the debt structure, the cold clutch of deflation, that evil confluence of the disease of in-

#### HERE THERE BE ROTSLERS

Trufan and noble gentleman artist Bill Rotsler, generous to the core, Maude, has sent me a fat packet of cartoons and fillos for distribution to art-starved faneds in the usual way:

You send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I fill it with a goodly combination of cartoons and illos, and send it back to you.

First come, first served.



flation. There are chickens coming home to roost, folk, which you would not want to meet on a lonely road at night.

Let me explain.

Great, important men are quivering daily in their boots, as they scan the financial news wires and note each added increment of evidence that for some inexplicable reason no matter how much credit/debt governments worldwide pump out into their economies, the current debt-created USA boom is withering and that (horrors upon horrors!) instead of the dread (but beneficial for debtors) inflation striking with fangs of increased prices, the ferocious economy-killing chickens of deflation (lowering prices, an ever-stronger dollar!) are stalking the land pecking out the eyes of those who must pay debts with ever-more-valuable (and hard to get) dollars.

[Howzat for a sentence?]

Today I see that England has raised its prime interest rate 2% to 12% in order to protect it from the voracious money-eating monster called the U.S. deficit. The English must compete for money in this era of free-wheeling international capital flows, and when the U.S. of A is paying up to 13.6% for the rental of money, it will suck money from the bloody moon. And add that our

Treasury is going to stop withholding 30% (estimated taxes) from the interest payments it makes to foreigners who buy U.S. govt. notes, bills and bonds, and further is going to issue bearer bonds to foreigners (who can remain thus anonymous and not be known to their own govt, or ours!--a privilege denied to U.S. citizens, by the way), and you see that U.S. govt. debt is suddenly enormously attractive.

Is it small wonder that the only way foreign governments will be able to keep some working capital in their countries is to compete for money, with higher and yet higher interest payments?

Of course these higher interest costs around the world are/will killing/kill the US boom and the reviving foreign economies. With unemployment at 10% in England and Europe, they are forced to commit suicide by raising their prime by 16-2/3%.

And the cream of the jest is that every rise in interest rates makes it more and more impossible for debtors (nations, citizens) to repay their debts. This causes banks to collapse. Defaults and bankruptcies will explode in numbers and size.

And causes the decline in prices as these countries and people cut back on imports/buying and the manufacturers/producers then must cut prices and wages in order to get any money at all to pay bills, keep going at any cost.

This process is going on now! You see it in OPEC oil prices, as Nigeria, Venezuela, others pump more oil and lie about it and sell at lower prices and lie about it.

You see it especially in the futures markets where, for the first time in living memory, the prices of commodities priced for delivery one-two-three-four months in the future are lower than spot (daily) prices.

And gold---ah, precious gold---the measure of inflation, the mother of hard money, has collapsed as its owners see no point in holding it, expecting no inflation, expect no rise in the price of gold, and would rather cash in and buy a bond or two and earn interest on their money.

More: as the value of gold and silver decline (with copper, aluminum, platinum, etc.) the value of the reserves of countries with gold in their treasuries declines, and they are thus poorer daily as millions of dollars are wiped out. And their debts loom larger and larger...

The value of crops decline as prices decline and the earnings decline even as the dollar value of the debts rise and rise...

THIS MONEY IS KILLED FASTER THAN GOVERNMENTS CAN CREATE IT. Because there are political and social limits on how much can be spent. You see the limits in this country, as congress managed a 150 billion dollar tax bill last month over three years in order to calm or appease the credit markets because in late May the

United States government came perilously close to being unable to sell its paper. The dealers (wholesalers) in government debt almost refused to buy because nobody was buying at retail. Nobody trusts the government, everyone expects higher interest rates and the dealers were suffering huge losses.

People and corporations with money have been burned badly during the past twenty years by our government's policy of inflating the money supply by deficit spending and by artificially feeding reserves into the banking system when it was politically and socially convenient to spend money it was unwilling to get honestly---by taxes. For a while in the 70's there was a negative interest rate as inflation was higher than legally-restricted savings account interest rates. The saver was ripped off royally. He rebelled, and now is demanding premium rates for savings.

At present the opposite is true: the debtor is being ripped off as interest rates go up as inflation sinks into deflation.

There is a great lie being repeated and encouraged by people who should know better; they do it to keep the lid on as long as possible. That lie is that the government in the form of congress and the Federal Reserve are the lenders of last resort and in a crunch will bail out any big debtor rather than let the

"system" collapse.

Well, they bailed out Lockheed didn't they? And the railroads? And Chrysler? And Argentina? (So far!) And proof positive: they bailed out the ninth largest bank in the U.S., Continental Illinois, didn't they? Hell, the Federal Deposit Insurance Agency put \$1.5 billion dollars into Continental in order to protect the big foreign and domestic depositors from losing all but the legal \$100,000 limit on the FDIC insurance. And the Federal Reserve is lending over \$2. billion dollars a day to the bank to keep it funded. They have to keep pouring that kind of money into the shell because the big depositors don't trust the government or Continental and are pulling their money out as their time deposits mature.

Continental-Illinois is a \$40 billion bank in size.

The government has been trying for months to get another bank to take it over, and cannot find a taker. (Too many bad-bad-terrible-lousy loans out which will never be repaid and are nothing but future billion-dollar losses.)

The FDIC put about one-sixth of its total worth/reserves into C-I. And it still has it in C-I, locked in. Trapped.

The FDIC cannot take over another bank of similar size. And almost all of the 1-8 size banks are now technically insolvent, with soured latin American loans towering over their capital base. They could not

**AN UNBELIEVABLE HOLOCAUST:  
HALF THE EARTH  
SCORCHED TO RUBBLE...  
BILLION'S DEAD**

**1991.**

A renegade Moslem dictator in Northern Africa controls a deadly and sophisticated armed satellite superior to anything in the U.S. arsenal. It is called

**THE SWORD OF ALLAH**

and it is capable of destroying the world.

Soon it will be used in the demolition of every inch of the United States—unless someone can stop it...



HERE ARE THE COVERS OF **THE SWORD OF ALLAH**.

IT SHOULD BE ON THE NEWSSTANDS NOW.

IT IS A NOVEL STRUCTURED BY ELTON ELLIOTT, COLLABORATIVELY PLOTTED BY ELTON ELLIOTT AND RICHARD GEIS, AND WRITTEN BY RICHARD GEIS.

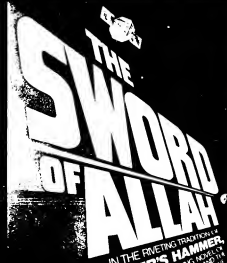
A SEQUEL TITLED **THE BURNT LANDS** HAS BEEN SOLD AND WRITTEN.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**BOOK**

**THE SWORD OF ALLAH**

Richard Elliott



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withstand a run by their depositors. Would congress allow the Fed to pour 200 billion dollars into Chase Manhattan Bank, into Citibank, into The Bank of America, into Manufacturers Hanover? In one week? Would the voters?

Would the world's owners of money continue to buy U.S. govt. debt if the deficit exploded by one trillion dollars in one year?

The government would have to pay astronomical interest rates and the taxpayers would revolt. Worse, no politician who allowed this would be re-elected!

There's an interesting problem coming up which I haven't seen mentioned yet: what happens when, in 1985 as I expect, but sometime, inevitably, when with the existing deficit in the 180 billion dollar range, the economy sinks into recession/depression and tax receipts sink correspondingly? Suddenly the president and congress will be facing a 250-300 billion-dollar deficit. The military will take tremendous cuts. As in the 1930s.

And another aspect of the current boom is hardly ever mentioned in the financial press: we are making possible the precarious status quo in Latin America, and helping Europe, by running a \$100+ billion trade deficit: we spend that much more on imports than we sell, thus giving foreigners a subsidy of sorts which helps them pay us interest on their debts to us.

What happens when our recovery ends and we sink into recession again? As we import less those debtor countries will earn fewer dollars and will be increasingly unable to pay interest, virtually guaranteeing defaults or sham "restructuring" of their debt. As with the war debts in the 20's and 30s, they will fade from memory....

All this vast debt must be killed, written off, forgotten--- so that the cycle of accumulation of debt---and the 50-55 years of boom---can be repeated.

Most people, however, measure a recession/depression by its unemployment rate. With unemployment at an official 7.1%, and with more people than ever ever working, and with people living more and more on their plastic (credit cards) and planning to make big purchases, it now seems incredible that all this boom and prosperity could melt away in a few months.

But the unemployment rate is a lagging indicator: it is lowest when the economy is turning down, and lowest when the economy has turned up.

These massive, long-term booms of fifty-fifty-five years slowly be-

gin after a collapse, as people cringe from debt and credit and accumulate savings, and as businesses, burned by debt, put aside large reserves. Banks have small debt to liquidity ratios. Everyone is conservative. Then the government's deficits gradually teach people to use debt, to profit from debt, as inflation sets in, and as time goes by more and more people learn to love debt, and times get loose and wild... Inevitably, as the common man gets wise, and as debt is too large in relation to savings and reserves, the interest charges overwhelm all and the collapse comes with a crash---just as things seem great again.

At the present we have great economic numbers going up on the board, and Reagan is riding high.

Retail sales continue up, but at the cost of higher and higher levels of consumer debt; all those car sales are on credit, and actual consumer income is lower than the amount of money spent---thus this recovery and the current good times are being maintained on the cuff. At some point the consumer will reach the limit of his/her ability and willingness to go into debt. Then the good times stop. In the meantime, manufacturers and retailers are as usual in this final stage of a recovery going full tilt to build up inventories to match this unsustainable buying binge.

This is already happening in the housing/wood products industry. A leading indicator. Housing starts and sales are down, and the lumber industry is on the verge of a collapse.

So, to sum up the near future: Maybe next month one more downturn in the unemployment rate. But more signs of economic slowdown. Higher interest rates as the dollar is in greater and greater demand to pay off debts and to hold in cash and to buy (from overseas) American government debt.

In 1985 another appalling deficit increase as the economy slows and tax receipts decline but government spending does not slow, but increases as unemployment increases and more people apply for welfare and foodstamps, etc.

The higher interest rates at any time could precipitate a default by one or more third world debtor countries which would trigger a crisis in the banking system worldwide.

If the next administration and congress try to "fix" the deficit problem by cutting spending and increasing taxes, in a declining economy, the economy will go into terminal freefall.

**SIGNALS:** After reaching a low point of 9.1%, Oregon's unemployment rate inched up in June to 9.3%. Agriculture and wood products, the mainstays of the Oregon economy, are suffering from lower prices, oversupply. This stagnation is spreading.

**WATCH FOR** big labor trouble as the postal unions and car-worker unions decide to strike GM, Ford, Chrysler, and the government.

I suspect the unions will be broken if necessary. Remember the Air Controllers.

THE ELECTION will be decided by how quickly the onrushing debt collapse and deflation overwhelm the world. If Reagan and his administration, and the Fed, can wriggle along and dodge the bullet without serious damage until late Fall, Reagan will be re-elected. If the economy shows serious cracking and sinking by November, look for an "upset".



My own affairs will be about this: seeing my novel markets about dead as the publishers live off inventory and stop buying.

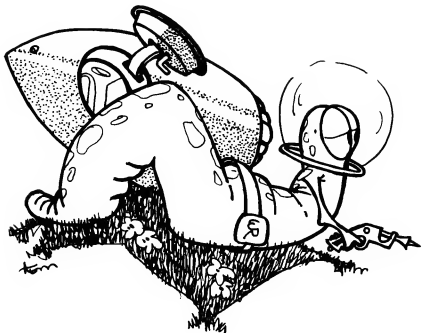
I'll have only SFR to work on and will be doing more and more of it myself, paying for less and less material, depending on more and more free contributions.

The greenhouse will allow me to do gardening when it rains, a problem for me every year. And it will provide early and late veggies, further making us less dependent on money, if necessary.

I expect SFR, too, to shrink in circulation and profit. Inevitably. But I welcome less mailing work.

I am going to buy a professionally made, high-efficiency fireplace insert, one of those which extend

# IN THE WAVE'S WAKE



## BY GREGORY BENFORD

To refurbish a cliché, British and American SF are two promontories of the genre divided by a common language.

When I think of British SF, two literary fashions seem to best typify its differences from the U.S. brand. One is landscape. As Joseph Nicholas remarked to me, the authors of, say, GRAYBEARD, THE TWILIGHT OF BRIAREUS, A DREAM OF WESSEX and PAVANE use physical background as a primary component. Sometimes this seems to lend the landscape an active role in determining events. Keith Roberts especially likes characters who are overwhelmed by their surroundings, relatively powerless against forces of both history and environment. Generating a real sense of time and place gives British SF a heavy novelistic "feel," a sensation we all got from Dickens' London fog, Hardy's Wessex heath and the Brontë's moors.

This parallels its frequent technophobia; technological change often transforms the land. In the U.S., much of the country was transformed by technological change within the lifetimes of its natives,

bringing to its SF a conviction that the landscape is malleable. We here have made the land, and though we of course have our regional SF novelists (Simak, Bryant), it is a bit less holy and forceful for us. Perhaps it is appropriate that the highest density of SF authors is in southern California, the product of vast water projects.

British SF's second major literary facet is an abiding concern for character. I'm more likely to remember the figures in British SF. I particularly find Bob Shaw's people quirky and interesting. However, this sometimes robs novels of the strangeness which is central to SF, and gives U.K. SF a flavor of domesticated, kitchen-coziness. U.K. critics often assume that higher standards in SF entail greater fidelity to the bourgeois novel of character, without wondering whether such concerns might undermine what SF can achieve. Portraying figures in a radically altered future is more difficult than, say, getting into the mind of a Joycean Dubliner. Making such people "real" can lessen the outré

effects an author may be striving for. It also avoids a deeper question -- how much of what we "know" about character is simply conventional wisdom of the moment, and when should the author try to destroy such assumptions before proceeding? By bringing science as a major driving force into narrative, we inevitably create fresh tensions between content and form, character and ground. To me, British SF sometimes dodges these problems. One of the real accomplishments of the New Wave was to raise these issues, but the lesson must be relearned by every generation.

It was fitting that the HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE series came from Britain. It pokes fun at SF clichés, avoiding the unsettling strangeness which is central to SF. Better to laugh, though, than simply ignore the implicit SF message -- that cozy humanism is not the only legitimate viewpoint.

### CLASS AND CRITICS

I've always found the class structure of Britain fascinating, as TIMESCAPE made obvious. Its operation in the SF world is murky to outsiders, but appears powerful. Perhaps, as is true of academic politics, the competition is fierce precisely because the spoils are so meagre. U.K. critics often assume the U.S. literary world is both cynical (publish or perish) and naive (politically and socially atomistic) -- a familiar we're-Athenas-you're-Rome ritual -- but in truth I don't see that much difference between the countries.

Among the authors themselves, there is a lot of antagonism between figures of comparable ambition. Certainly something must explain the occasional outbursts of virulence, such as the mugging masquerading as criticism performed in a recent Foundation by Meadley on Aldiss. This isn't all to the bad of course -- I find Charles Platt a delightfully venomous critic of the foibles of the field, and his delicious love of gossip appeals to my low nature.

In some British SF there is, to my ear, a preferred class voice -- cool, reflective, ironic, uninvolved -- which seems an echo of class rituals in the society as a whole. Its drawback is a certain self-consciousness that pervades works of serious intent. Preference for this voice helps along the impression of van lassitude, conversation in a nasal drawl, and fin de siècle poses. Among the writers there appears to be an affected dislike of organizations, too -- particularly the hated SFMA, which has more members in Canada



than in the U.K. The recent ruckus over the Nebulas drew the lines well -- a certain easygoing American practicality about the inevitable bias in awards, contrasted with a British insistence on high moral standards, striking of dramatic postures, and purity of public appearances.

If the critical game is played in Britain with both daggers and broadswords, nonetheless the outcome is quite pleasing. We have some good academic critics (Scholles, Slusser, Rabkin, Samuelson, etc.) and one outstanding writer-commentator on the field (Budrys), but the British have the best all-round observers. John Clute's convoluted syntax alternately exposes and obscures a penetrating intellect capable of adroit turns of both logic and phrase. Roz Kaveny, operating out of a sensibility which seems the most European and ideological, shows a broad grasp of the field, and the tensions generic to SF. Brian Stapledon brings an original synthesis of writerly know-how and sociological insight, though at times I sense that he wishes every book were heavy on the social extrapolation and light on everything else, so he could really dig his teeth in. There is Paringer and Priest and Watson, coming from different angles, but all with the viewpoints educated both in the academic sense and the fan sense. The evolution of British SF appears to be more heavily influenced by criticism than the American, and this may be a good thing.

#### BREAKFAST IN THE RUINS

It has been a decade or so since NEW WORLDS died while Charles Platt tried CPR on it, but the ruins of the New Wave assumptions still cast their long blue shadows.

You'd think, given the absence of translation costs and troubles, that British SF would have a big influence on the American scene. It doesn't, mostly because of the New Wave.

Judy Lynn Del Rey once remarked that foreign SF doesn't sell well in the U.S.A., and that seems to be an automatic assumption among American editors. They say British SF hasn't sold well in the past, and thus is seldom bought today. ("It's downbeat novels with good characterization," a prominent editor said to me while I was discussing this article.) Meanwhile, American SF writers loom large in Britain -- indeed, American SF seems to be widely regarded as the real stuff, with a flavor other countries don't have.

Why? If I had to sum up the last fifteen years, I'd say that the New Wave won in England and lost in the U.S.A. The common rhetoric of that time was that the New Wave represented pessimism and technophobia. This is a shallow game, deciding whether a piece of fiction is "optimistic" or not. Ultimately, writers are judged by rather more interesting standards than whether they wrote *Ja oder Nein* in the face of life. Instead, it seems to me in retrospect that passivity was the fatal hallmark of the New Wave impressed into the minds of American readers.

As a metaphor, entropy seems to please the European imagination better than the American. It often leads to (in McLuhan terms) a cool rather than hot writing style. American readers often complain of a low energy level in British writing. Similarly, hot-style writers like Ellison do less well in the U.K. Those New Wave figures who took a more hot tone, stressing angry pessimism -- Spinnrad is the obvious leader here -- seem to have fared well in the years since. Colin Greenland's book on the New Wave shows, for those of us whose memories have faded, how diverse it really was. Overall, though, there seems a general agreement with Aldiss's comment in the sixties that SF should recognize the fallen state of man and the tragic view of life which is essential to all literature. One can agree with this view while still noticing that it is a *cul de sac*, like any other prescription for what literature "must" be.

Is this tenor still present in the U.K.? Judging from INTERZONE, that notable attempt to revive the dash of British SF, yes. Malcolm Edwards is clearly going to be a major editor in England, and his first short story in INTERZONE #4 begins its second paragraph, "Norton felt gripped by a lassitude born of futility, but as on the eight other mornings of this unex-

pected coda to his existence, fought off the feeling and slid wearily out of bed." The story is a well-done direct descendant of Ballard's bleak landscapes with so what figures striking postures before it; this time, CND horrors take the place of Ballard's assorted implacable disasters.

It is easy to see this as a reaction to Europe's self-inflicted wounds in the first half of the twentieth century. Ballard clearly slugs of the death of empire, a kind of reverse Kipling. I suspect this fashionable despair comes in part from the fact that literary intellectuals are a progressively less powerful class. The influence of arts graduates on U.K. SF is considerable, and probably explains the splitting-away of writers like Bulmer, Brunner and Sheffield, who are more interested in technology. In the fifties, British SF writers often adopted a fake-American voice to get published, but there is a genuine strain in U.K. SF which is not technophobic and does more nearly match American tastes.

It is best exemplified by Clarke, who is of course regarded as utterly unrepresentative of British SF. Yet he is only atypical of the post-60s phase. His success derives primarily from an older tradition: the dispassionate cosmological view, a la J. Bernal and Stapledon, with touches of Wells. Whereas American world-figure SF authors represent a time or an attitude which is localized (Heinlein, Bradbury, Asimov, Herbert), Clarke seems to appeal to an international taste, yet has firm roots in British literature.

There is a contrary flavor in British SF, of disconnectedness from experience, as though the future is more approachable through dreaming than through extrapolation of the present. Travel by metaphors, they seem to say, not by the icons of gadgetry, or even science. Ballard preferred to imagine





The second legacy has been a disaster for the British writers who've come along since 1970. They seem to work in the shadow of the New Wave, unable to break through its metaphors, and bearing the weight of publishers' opinion that they are non-commercial writers. They receive less support at home than seems fair, as well. I was astonished at the recent choice of twenty books for maximum publicity promotion by the U.K. Book Board. While it seems reasonable that the British would push their own authors, to the tune of 40% of the list, three of the eight were dead (none of the Americans were), and no British author who emerged after 1965 was represented. Contrast the Americans on the list, which included Wolfe, Bishop, Cherryl, Donaldson and me. To me this betrays an appalling lack of faith among U.K. publishers in the "legs" of their own recent worthy authors. Surely a Watson or a Priest novel could have been used. This attitude spells hard times for the newer writers, and may well mean the U.K. is eating its seed corn.

#### RIDERS OF THE LIVING WAVE

This would be a pity, for if this essay has seemed rather dull, I should end by expressing my great respect for British SF. Considering their numbers, British authors are enormously effective and influential among American authors such as myself.

Perhaps its most underrated figure is Bob Shaw. He has steadily considered a wide range of problems, venturing into both the galaxy and the human soul with genuine intelligence. His *GROUND ZERO MAN*

I still remember vividly.

Brian Aldiss is a remarkable man, a sort of U.K. Fred Pohl, -- unashamed of his pulp origins, wide-ranging in his contacts, an enthusiastic anthologist, an effective advocate in the larger world -- though with an innate literary sense more experimental and broad. Some in the U.S.A. feared he had gone into decline after the New Wave, but the *Helliconia* series has been a stunning success here, reviving interest, and proving that Aldiss is capable of great work.

The most madcap, daring major figure to emerge in the last decade or so was Ian Watson. His first book burst upon us, and for a while he seemed bound to repeat the same themes, but lately he has displayed innovation and developing craft. America rather than visit it; facts would get in the way. (Indeed, there is a pervasive inability among Europeans to see American "optimism" as anything more than a peculiar assertion or defiance, little more than naive bravado, in the face of anxiety.) Moorcock does enormous research for some of his unusual period-piece novels, but not for his SF.

The outstanding legacy of the New Wave in the U.S.A. is two-fold: First, an increased literary sophistication used by many of our best writers, from adroit dinosaurs like Fred Pohl to newer, hard-edged people like Joe Haldeman. This is indeed a positive force, often under-rated. I felt the influence of British SF strongly in the early 1970s, when I began to think earnestly about writing.

John Sladek is American, but in his long residence there he reflects some U.K. characteristics with his rather dark visions and rich characterization. His delicious humor, though, is the best in the field, and his interest in technology -- even to the point of computer-written stories, and the remarkable *RODERICK* -- mark him as unusual. Similarly, Barrington Bayley has been spinning his clever, idea-heavy tales for a long time without great notice -- mostly, I suspect because they are so simply told. An American counterpart has arisen, Rudy Rucker, who brings more education to the same territory.

Among the newer writers I like Rob Holdstock's earth imagery, Andy Stephenson's promising beginnings, and especially David Langford's *THE SPACE EATER*. Langford has an unusual balance of wit and scientific knowledge that could lead to great things.

So there is ample talent available in England to continue the grand tradition. And the old modes die slowly. John Brunner, the most American-like of the major British authors, continues to produce solid work, while M. John Harrison carries on with technical celebrations of entropy. (As an physical idea, entropy is subtle; it plays an important role in cosmology, and its aspects are still being explored. Little of this has penetrated to the literary consciousness, and particularly not to these still enamoured of it in SF. There is still fertile ground there for someone, but it demands some homework.) I expect less a new literary movement in England's future than a gradual evolution away from the postures evoked to deal with the fall of empire. How long this will take is hard to say. Decades, certainly.

British SF is an arena in which European and American attitudes can find expression and meet head on. It can look in both directions, east and west, and may be most important for that central fact. Indeed, Huxley and Orwell may be most important for their work which has this aspect. British SF grows more important as the western cultures come under great pressure.

There will always be conflict about the aims and methods of Anglo-American SF, which the continental Europeans seem to perceive as the core of the field. But we should remember that the sincerest friend of an idea is its most incisive critic.

# and then i saw...

## AN UNCOMMON LOVE (CBS)

is another sex epic designed to seduce/lure viewers during this ratings war period.

A marine biology professor falls in love with a beautiful late-twenties female student who, it turns out, works part time in a massage parlor to support herself and her child.

The usual emotional and plot complications ensue. Eventual happy ending.

The self-improving hooker, a victim of incest and rape as a child, with low self-image, 16 years a pro, still is trying to turn her life around.

This TV movie conforms to all the current psychological/sociological clichés about why women are and become prostitutes.

In this case the age-old fantasy used by millions of writers is used one mo' time: Love Conquers All.

Even so, Barry Bostwick and especially Kathryn Harrold give fine performances, and there are moments of vicious reality and high drama.

## FLASHDANCE (R)

has two great things going for it---Jennifer Beals as a young dancer, and her (and a double's) superb, fast-paced dancing.

The ho-hum, incredible plot: she's an 18-year-old welder who dances in a low-class bar for extra money but who has a dream of being a high-class legitimate dancer. She resists for a face-saving few encounters her boss's advances and attempts to help her dancing career. She finally puts on a wov of an audition for the upper class dancing school she lusts to attend.

An 18-year-old girl welder in a union shop? In Pittsburgh?

Well, it's a captivating movie that comes alive only when it has the beat and the dancing. Social fantasy the rest of the way: lies we love to swallow.

## BEASTMASTER (PG)

is a CONAN-like movie about a young man seeking revenge for the death of his father and the destruction of his village by a horde of ravaging nomads, and the sorcerer who caused him to be untimely ripped from his mother's womb and almost-sacrificed by a witch-ally/underling of the sorcerer... There are Dumaslike elements, too, since the infant was the unborn son of a local king and was saved from sacrifice by a local village leader who adopted him...

Marc Singer plays the youth, and besides being a good actor stuck in a plotboiler, has a great male body which is displayed well (he isn't overwhelmingly muscled like Arnold Schwarzenegger (however it's the spell-)). The hero youth herein has the power to see through animals' eyes (including a hawk) and to ask them for help in critical situations. His most impressive helper is a Bengal tiger sprayed black (but you can still faintly see the stripes).

Let me not ignore his love interest, Tanya Roberts (once briefly a Charlie's Angel) who in a brief nude scene displays two fine talents. (Hey, I'm a tit man---I notice those things!)

The dialogue in this movie is minimal and barbarian-clumsy, stilted, with a hint of Archaic Phrasing to give it "authenticity".

## 48 HOURS (R)

reveals Eddie Murphy's astounding presence and talent on screen. As a convict sprung for 48 hours to help a cop catch a killer whom he knows and had "business" with, Murphy is riveting; you can't look away. He's fun and interesting to watch. He's so much in possession of himself, so sure and aware and street wise... His smarts and knowledge, his aura of being in control of a scene and a situation even as he is handcuffed, is amazing.

Nick Nolte, a big, shambling bear of a man, playing a maverick,

brutal, honest, tenacious cop, is excellent as he grudgingly comes to respect his convict helper, then becomes friends with him.

The plot is routine; the acting and charisma are not.

## AIRPLANE II: THE SEQUEL (PG)

is more of the sight gags, puns, jokes, japes and satires that made up AIRPLANE. Same core cast, with Robert Hays as the neurotic pilot who, this time, is being plotted against and acted against by a commercial space shuttle company to prevent him from exposing the flaws in its expensive passenger shuttle.

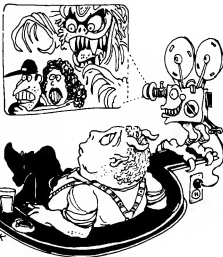
Julie Hagerty plays the somewhat dim-witted airline hostess who loves him.

Once again clichés are ripped to pieces before our very eyes. No gag is too low to stoop to. And once again Peter Graves plays the pilot who likes little boys.

Funny low-humor film. Do not expect high comedy. But you do get a gag every thirty-seconds.

## THE BETSY (R)

You know, the only reason this clunker of an auto tycoon movie is played and played on cable is because about 12 minutes into the film Kathleen Beller has a gratuitous nude scene one morning in the estate pool. Wow. Betcha every time it's played VCR's all over the country click on.



# RICHARD E. GEIS

### THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON (R)

is a Broadway play brought to the screen. The hallmark of serious plays is the onion effect---the peeling away of layers of pretense and lying to reveal the primal character, the naked id, the terrible secrets.

In this play/movie, four members of the starting five of a high school state championship basketball team get together after 24 years, in Scranton, Pa.

Three of them, the mayor, a school principal, a wealthy businessman, live in the city. The fourth, a drunken Hollywood writer, is the brother of the principal.

They gather to honor themselves and their coach who is dying of cancer.

The coach is played with heavy, weary cynicism and illusion by Robert Mitchum. The mayor, Bruce Dern; the principal, Stanley Keach; the businessman, Paul Sorvino; the writer, Martin Sheen.

The movie is absorbing, excellently acted, well produced. The stripped-away images, self-protection and illusions bring rage, jealousy, envy, bitterness, hate. But confession is good for the soul and to forgive is divine, and these four end the reunion at ease with each other again.

Note: this is a man's picture: there isn't a single woman in the film.

### EXTRO (R)

is a made-in-England sf horror movie about a man Taken by aliens who is returned three years later to promote the infestation of our planet by these creatures.

But he arrives back very strangely: one of the aliens lands and "impregnates" a young woman. The alien then disintegrates overnight into gunky mush. The woman, overnight, swells in the belly to monstrous size and gives "birth" to the man in a gross emergence scene. She dies in the process.

From there the man infects his son and they wreak havoc in the apartment house, leaving a dozen alien eggs in the bathtub after being incubated/created in the body of another young woman.

Grisly. Grue.

The man and his son then go to a pickup spot in the forest and are taken "home" by the alien ship.

The film producers dreamed up an illogical plot, created some repellent special effects, and spaced it all out in a boring domestic plot involving the mother, her live-in man friend, a maid and her boy friend, and the boy----and the returned father.

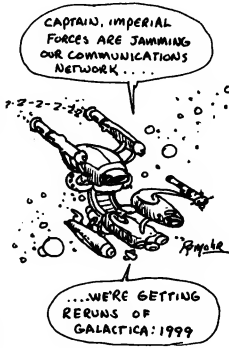
A few nude shots of the maid, who was very lovely indeed.

This could have been a fine, low-budget sf/horror film, but it settled for shock.

### NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CLASS REUNION (R)

suffers from cuteness and an attempt to jape the horror film cliché plot of a student seeking murderous revenge for a terrible humiliation inflicted by classmates ten years before.

A few good gags, a few good angles, shots, situations, but.... They all tried hard, but lacking major comedic talent---a Belushi or Chevy Chase---no cigar.



### RISKY BUSINESS (R)

shows us a rich high school boy saying "What the fuck!" after his parents leave for a couple weeks and leave him alone in their big house and alone with his dad's \$40,000 Porsche.

He becomes involved with a call girl...one thing leads to another... and he ends having to use the house as a brothel involving a cohort of prostitutes servicing the local boys (who are all loaded, it seems) to pay to have the Porsch dry cleaned after it had been dunked in the lake.

Somehow, in this comedy of upper class schoolboy errors we feel sorry for and root for this kid who lied, cheated, pimped, bribed.

Amazing.

### OCTOPUSSY (PG)

leads the viewer a merry, action-filled chase, with tongue-in-cheek humor, broad acting and acting broads, a constant series of action/suspense peaks and special effects of minor but intriguing surprise.

Of course it's all absurd, a satire of itself, a run-on movie which is too long, too long, until its plot twists run out of curves and finally the ultimate atomic doom is frustrated at the last second by---James Bond. Or, rather, aging Roger Moore with a host of doubles.

The nudity-prone opening titles promise more than the film delivers, but wotthehell. I wouldn't pay very much to see one of these tired re-plays, but on cable I'll sit through one once.

### SUMMER CAMP (R)

is little more than an extended excuse for revealing sexy fun and games. The plot description runs thus: "The owner of a failing summer camp decides to raise money by holding a reunion for the now-matured alumni."

The producers led no bra undone in their attempts to keep their movie from dying.

### MY TUTOR (R)

has more class than SUMMER camp, and more erotic and graphic wrestling in bed, but I gave up on it near the end as the story of a rich kid trying to lose his virginity, losing it, and then getting his high school girlfriend, too, seemed too thin to carry anything but boredom.

There is, however, one memorable scene in a plush whorehouse where the too-drunk hero encounters a pair of enormous, perfectly-shaped tits of pillow size which will linger in your memory for years. Who was that naked woman? Most men would love to wallow in/on that soft white flesh for a few moments. What an experience it would be!

There's some good humor in this, adequate acting... But, again, the formula seemed to call for a nude scene every five minutes.

Kevin McCarthy was wasted as the boy's rich father who hires a pretty young French tutor to get his son a good make-up grade and thus into Yale.

AND THEN I SAW... CONTINUES ON  
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# DARRELL SCHWEITZER

INTERVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

## PART TWO

SFR: We share a common interest in things Lovecraftian -- do you anticipate doing another volume of ESSAYS LOVECRAFTIAN or a further DREAM QUEST OF HPL?

SCHWEITZER: A new edition of ESSAYS LOVECRAFTIAN will be published by Starmont House later this year under the title DISCOVERING H.P. LOVECRAFT. It will contain the same articles, a new introduction, updated contributor notes, and will drop the illustrations. If it's successful, maybe there can be more. Certainly the material is out there. The new edition will also have proofreading, the pages in the right order, and regular payments to the contributors, these being amenities the original publisher failed to provide. (Anyone trying to describe the original publisher, T.K. Graphics, the late and unlamented, should probably read Joe Singer's HOW TO CURSE IN YIDDISH first.)

I would like to revise DREAM QUEST OF HPL a little bit too. I will, if Borgo Press ever does a second edition. There are some factual errors and some awkward phrasings, many of which resulted from 1) a copyeditor who did not know the subject as well as I did and 2) the fact that the book, as written, was too long and had to be cut. The book also contains several doctrinal heresies, which got some Lovecraft fans up in arms. These I will leave in.

SFR: In your DREAM QUEST OF HPL you suggested that everything possible is known about his life, yet there seems to be new material surfacing all the time -- even new stories such as "The Night Ocean" and "Madness Out of Space." You've also indulged in a bit of influence-tracing recently in "HPL and Tibetan Corpse Wrestling" (NYCTALOPS No. 17) -- where is all this leading? Is Lovecraft really that important?

SCHWEITZER: Yuggoth, did I say that? What a dumb thing to say! Actually, you misquote me. What



I said on page 3 was that "virtually nothing of a biographical nature has been left unearthed," which is a bit of an exaggeration, I guess. But you must admit that an astonishing amount is known about this writer who died in obscurity in 1937. The amount of detail in de Camp's biography and elsewhere is quite remarkable. You won't find that much in most other literary biographies, even of writers who died more recently.

You seem to be talking about literary discoveries. Indeed, "The Night Ocean," for all that it is unreadably awful, is a literary discovery of some importance, the same way that the publication of ISLANDS IN THE STREAM was important, for all that it didn't add to Hemingway's reputation very much. (And arguably detracted from it. "The Night Ocean" considerably detracted from Barlow's reputation, I suspect. I would like to know how much of that story is Lovecraft. Note that the other Barlow story revisited by Lovecraft, "Till All the Seas," was stunningly terrible. Barlow simply wasn't a writer. As a kid, he was a fan. When he grew up, he became an archeologist. When Lovecraft tried to revise something that had no merit and showed no promise, the results were predictable. This is part of my on-going Theory of Nothing.)

"The Madness Out of Space" I am not familiar with. I think I heard it mentioned amongst the eldritch crew at NEON as some sort of pastiche or non-authentic work. You tell me.

"H.P. Lovecraft and Tibetan Corpse-Wrestling" is a very slight nearly frivolous article written largely because the title is neat. Could you resist? It has one solid fact in it, that the corpse-wrestling entry in the COMMON-PLACE BOOK seems to be derived from Madame David-Neel's MAGIC & MYSTERY IN TIBET. I could be wrong, even on that. Lovecraft may have read about the practice in NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. But the descriptions are very close, and the book was available at the time so I had enough of an excuse to hang a few words on the title.

But when dealing with something more substantial, like St. Armand's THE ROOTS OF HORROR ETC. you mustn't confuse insight or interpretation with biographical knowledge. The St. Armand book adds virtually nothing to what is known about Lovecraft's life. It provides much insight into his writing and thought, however.

Is Lovecraft important?

Yes, he is, without doubt, the most successful SF/fantasy writer of his generation. Critically, he is the only successful fantasy writer to come out of the pulps before the John W. Campbell era. Your works aren't going to see the joys of A. Merritt turning into a growth industry for academic critics. Or those of Howard, for instance. As I found out when writing CONAN'S WORLD AND ROBERT E. HOWARD, the reason there is so little secondary material on Howard is that his fiction has no depth. Robert E. Howard's philosophical thought as shown in the Conan stories? Let us not be silly. (Howard is very interesting as the subject of a biography, however, as de Camp's DARK VALLEY DESTINY: THE LIFE & DEATH OF ROBERT E. HOWARD will show.) But there is genuine substance in Lovecraft, in a way that must have gone completely unnoticed by most of his readers. Just like there is genuine substance in Wells.

The next time you wonder whether or not Lovecraft is important, take a good, careful look through S.T. Joshi's H.P. LOVECRAFT: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (Kent State University Press). What are the implications of 400 pages of entries in itty-bitty print, detailing everything from reviews to academic theses from all over the world, countless reprints in dozens of languages, issues of magazines devoted to Lovecraft? Listed are 27 books or pamphlets about Lovecraft in several languages, 692 articles about him and quite a bit more. What are the implications of a university press being willing to publish something like this? Then there is Joshi's H.P. LOVECRAFT: 4 DECADES OF CRITICISM (Ohio University Press), which draws from a wide variety of sources (and in the process shows Edmund Wilson getting steamrollered by subsequent opinion; Wilson claimed there was nothing in Lovecraft; literally hundreds of other critics all over the world have written in detail about what he was missing), and again, would never have been published if there were not serious and sustained interest in Lovecraft. There's also a Monarch Notes volume on him.

Face it: Lovecraft has overtaken all of his contemporaries in critical acclaim, popular acclaim, whatever you want to measure success by. He has also overtaken most of the classical figures. I'm sure Lovecraft is more widely read than Hawthorne these days. He may be more widely read

than Poe. He may someday overtake Poe in critical recognition. It may easily turn out that Lovecraft has more to say to the 21st or 22nd Century than Poe does. And consider the writers Lovecraft considers to be his masters: He was convinced he could never come near such "real writers" as Machen, Blackwood, James or de la Mare, all of whom are now hovering on the edge of oblivion. If they are read at all, they're read by people who have been led to them through Lovecraft.

Jorge Luis Borges wrote a story which is a tribute to Lovecraft. He seems to have worked on the assumption that the well-read Spanish reader or, of course, were familiar with Lovecraft's work. I wonder how the readers of the ATLANTIC felt when the story was published there. ("There are More Things", collected in THE BOOK OF SAND.) Borges wrote a book on American literature. In the section on SF, he discussed the three writers he considered to be the most important: Heinlein, Bradbury and Lovecraft.

Actually, there is considerable evidence that HPL is already considered a major American writer in many parts of the world, particularly in the Spanish-speaking countries. I think he will turn out to be generally recognized as an important literary figure, on par with, say, Kafka (although he may remain more popular than Kafka), although the recognition will probably come in this country much later than it does elsewhere. It will probably take a generation or two for American academics to catch on, long enough for the old ones (as opposed to the Old Ones, who are always with us) to die off and be replaced by their students who are reading Lovecraft. The continued and growing scholarly interest, including the various university press publications, suggests that this process has already begun.

Interestingly, you often hear Lovecraft severely downgraded by contemporary SF and horror/fantasy writers. I think they're jealous. They know, deep inside them, that their work doesn't have the essential something that makes Lovecraft rate all that attention.

SFR: I can't resist taking this opportunity to point out that HPL's FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH AND OTHER POEMS has been carried along in the wave of his popularity. Critical opinion (including yours) holds that Lovecraft was a dull versifier who was wasting his

time dabbling in poetry, but the fact remains that FUNGI is just about the only mass market paperback of fantasy verse going -- short of the new COMPLETE POEMS OF RAY BRADBURY and a few odd ends. Dull it may be, but doesn't Lovecraft's unique poetic "success" deserve a little more critical respect?

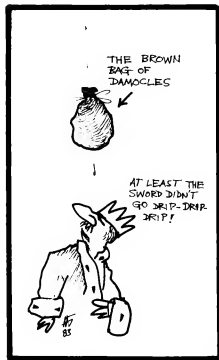
**SCHWEITZER:** First of all, I can't resist pointing out that FUNGI is apparently out of print ... It is not listed in the most recent F&SF Book Company catalogue I have. But more to the point: There is no such publishing category as "fantasy verse."

The Bradbury and Lovecraft poetry books happen to be among the few volumes which can be marketed as tie-ins to fantasy prose, and put in the science fiction section of the bookstore. If Sprague de Camp were suddenly to become wildly popular, his (much superior) poetry would also probably be only in paperback. I guess the only reason Howard's (also much superior -- to both HPL and Bradbury) verse was not paper-backed is that the Howard audience is far younger and less sophisticated than either Lovecraft's or Bradbury's. Now, it just happens that in America, poetry books (i.e. those which are put in the poetry section of the bookstore and sell to the audience that looks there) are usually published in trade paperback size. This is largely due to the influence of New Directions and Grove Press, both of which were experimenting with trade paperbacks in the "literary" category decades before the format was tried in popular fiction. You'll know that Lovecraft (and Bradbury, for that matter) has made it with the poetry audience when you see them published in trade paper by New Directions or City Lights Press or some such. I should also point out that Tom Disch has made it with that audience and his books are published by poetry publishers, put in the poetry section, etc. Lovecraft certainly has no reputation as a poet. I think you must admit that if Lovecraft's prose were not popular, no one would have bothered to rescue his verse from oblivion, let alone publish it in paperback. This is also probably true of Bradbury.

Lovecraft was really a rather terrible poet. Some of his best verses are readable. Some, like "Little Sam Perkins," which is an elegy for a cat, are inadvertently funny. The prologue to "The Poe-et's Nightmare," which is all about O.D.ing on icecream,

is also funny, but I think it's supposed to be. Some of his poems are refreshingly coherent in this day and age when much alleged poetry is opaque gibberish, but they have no special charge to the language which raises them above the level of mediocrity.

I have a theory, which I shall offer briefly. Lord Dunsany, who wrote some of the most poetic prose in the language, was also a terrible poet, fully as bad as Lovecraft. His verse is more superficially competent, but totally conventional and vapid. Lovecraft too, wrote some wonderfully poetic prose at times (though he certainly could not match Dunsany as a stylist), but



his verse is leaden. My theory, which is mine, which is my theory ("Ahem!" he said in a falsetto voice, doing an impression of John Cleese in drag explaining his theory about the brontosaurus), is that many of the best writers of poetic prose are would-be poets who aren't quite good enough to write decent verse. So their poetic ability is sublimated into their prose. Of course, when you get somebody who is also a first-rate poet, like Mervyn Peake, the results in prose can be even more spectacular.

**SFR:** Do you see a significant change in the editorial attitude toward SF/fantasy poetry, by the way? AMAZING and ASIMOV'S use

verse just about every issue now, but in most of the others it's rare or nonexistent. Is reader resistance the main problem -- or is it editorial whim?

**SCHWEITZER:** No. IASFM has used verse almost every issue from its inception. AMAZING began to do so during the Mavor period. There is a change over the past ten years or so, in that the prozines are using lots of verse and verse by people other than major names. It has never been unusual to see something by de Camp or, say, Doris Pittkin Buckner in F&SF. NEW WORLDS used a lot in its later issues. (That included much verse by people known only as poets. But then NW was more of a "little literary" magazine in which verse would be expected.) I think one reason there has not been much verse in SF magazines is that what there has been has frequently been awful. Ever read the filler verse in the Gernsback magazines? The poetry department Lilith Lorraine ran in FANTASY BOOK in the '40s? This mostly consisted of doggerel about spaceships. Pulp SF was not aesthetically-oriented, at least not on a conscious level.

I doubt the readers of say, THRILLING WONDER STORIES in 1943 read much poetry of any kind. But as the field grew up, and got more literarily sophisticated, there came to be a readership which could appreciate real poetry. There has always been some in F&SF. But for the most part, I doubt SF readers are very interested. Poetry is just outside the range of say, ANALOG. A less specialized magazine like IASFM can afford to run some. After all, those who don't like it can just skip it, without feeling that too much space is wasted. (The alternative for filling those blank spots at the ends of stories would be cartoons, or maybe just spot illos.) I think there would be reader resistance to long poetry. Anybody who has a burning urge to write ten-thousand-line SF poems has my sympathy.

To get back to the original point. I think there has been a change, but it hasn't been a very large one. More magazines just happen to use verse as filler than used to. There is a fraction of the audience which is at least marginally interested in it. But you won't know there's a large interest until mass market SF poetry anthologies start appearing and doing well. I'm not holding my breath.

I might also add that very

few SF editors today really know much about poetry. Nor do most of the poets, I suspect. It is very hard to get poetry which is more than strung-out prose, and usually muddy prose at that. There's very little verse in the prozines in the last few years that has impressed me as memorable. One or two things in IASPM. But this is a problem for our whole culture. I haven't seen much memorable verse in AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW or the NEW YORKER either.

Anybody who is going to write great SF poetry will first have to re-invent poetry as a form. Going back to 19th Century styles of fixed forms can only be forced and artificial. Most 20th Century poetry has lost its ability to communicate. The new form, whatever it might be, would have to be as vital and of its time as say, the sonnet was during the reign of Elizabeth I.

I don't claim that I'm the one to do this. I have published verse, no worse than most of the rest, but no better either.

SFR: I was amused by your Tom O'Bedlam story "Continued Lunacy" in the March AMAZING, but not being the scholar you are I wasn't familiar with the sources mentioned. My only previous encounter with Tom O'Bedlam was in the introduction to G. Legman's THE LIMERICK -- did you know that (according to Legman, at least) the Tom O'Bedlam ballad was an early root of the limerick? Which inspires in me the following limerick:

"Tom O'Bedlam, a poet,  
insane,  
Will rarely come in from  
the rain.  
Poor Tom is all wet,  
For he hasn't learned yet  
That a waterfain ain't lovers' lane."

SCHWEITZER: It might be pretentious to claim I'm a scholar on the subject. I think I first encountered the figure of Tom O'Bedlam in Shakespeare. Or it might have been in the song, "Boys of Bedlam" on the Steeleye Span record, "Please to See the King," which is allegedly traditional, though I have never been able to find it in another source. "Tom O'Bedlam's Song" is probably familiar to most SF people from the quote in THE STARS MY DESTINATION. (Not to mention John Brunner's BEDLAM PLANET.) I outlined other sources in the blurb to the story (which I wrote): Bishop

Percy's RELIQUES\*, Isaac Disraeli's CURIOUSITIES OF LITERATURE. With my interest in folksongs and folklore and my constant rooting through used book sales (I am a great book hunter: At a recent sale I went through some 50,000 books thoroughly. It only took me 5 hours!). It was inevitable that I would find this stuff. None of which has anything to do with my background in formal literary scholarship. (I have a M.A. in English.) You learn by picking up interesting books.

SFR: Will there be more Tom O'Bedlam stories? An eventual collection, perhaps?

SCHWEITZER: One more, which I promised to write for Elinore



Mavor, called "The Last Dangerous Lunacy." I don't think the series has enough to it -- it is basically a conceit -- to make a book-length work, without the later stories turning into hard and fast formula. When you're writing a series, you should have

\*This book has a whole section of "mad songs," of which I made some use. The worthy Bishop -- 18th Century -- suggested that perhaps the reason that the English have more songs about madness than anyone else is that they go mad more often.

the good grace to quit while you are ahead. But I do intend to include all four stories in a Starblaze book which takes its title from the song, "A Host of Furious Fancies," which will be a collection of the best stories of mine (excepting those in WE ARE ALL LEGENDS and ECHOES OF THE GODDESS) which are available at the time. It'll be out in a couple years.

Several of my mini-series will be including the Etelven thios trilogy from WEIRDBOOK (Horror!) I have written a fantasy trilogy. But it's short stories, so that's not as trite), and at least a couple stories from my Nameless Series, which consists of a bunch of stories stretching back to the beginning of my career ("The Story of Obbok," "The Pretenses of Hinyar," "A Part of the Game," etc.) set in a world of four continents and clearly defined edges. I have never been able to come up with a name for it because this world exists in reference to no other and the inhabitants merely call it "the world." J.B. Post, the noted collector of fantasy maps, finds this frustrating because he can't classify the map of the setting, which was published on the covers of HOLME LOND in 1971.

SFR: Your "Sunrise" in a recent PULPSMITH is the only science fiction story of yours I recall right off. Why is fantasy of more interest to you than SF?

SCHWEITZER: Well, with the Angel of Death appearing in it as a character, if you don't interpret the Angel's appearance as a hallucination, I would argue the story is fantasy. But I have published a little SF: "Wanderers and Travelers We Were" in ANDROMEDA 3, edited by Peter Weston (1978), "Never Argue With Antique Dealers" in WYRD (later reprinted in FANTASTIC, January, 1980), and "Boy Meets Girl, a Romance of the Year 2463" in a very late GALAXY. (This story, alas, only contributed to GALAXY's decline. It's not very good.) My best SF stories are "A Public Nuisance" and "Return From Exile," both of which have been sold before, even set in type, but are unsold at the moment due to magazine collapses. "Exile" has sold twice in this country, once in Germany and is looking for an American publisher right now.

It's not a matter of fantasy interesting me more than SF, but where my talents lie. My ability to do serious, realistic SF is rather limited because while my scientific education is far better than that of most people, it is not good enough for me to



get to the fringe of some discipline and speculate intelligently. Also, more seriously, my imagination doesn't work that way. SF is basically a form of realism and I am not a realist. I can do SF after a fashion, but it prevents me from exercising my real strengths.

I wish I could write SF more. I am not seeing enough good, thoughtful, seriously-intentioned SF published these days. My usual response to people who complain about the state of the art is to shut up and do better yourself. But, alas, I haven't been able to.

SFR: Will PROCRASTINATIONS #16 ever come out?

SCHWEITZER: Real soon now. Actually, this year sometime. I suppose I should explain to readers that PROCRASTINATION is a fanzine I have been publishing since 1969. It has never been widely circulated and has at times suffered from fairly severe reproduction problems. Mineo is an unforgiving medium, beloved of fan traditionalists, but I would abandon it at once and go offset if I had the money. Still, the magazine has published material by Bob Shaw, Michael Moorcock, Ray Bradbury, David Bunch, Roger Zelazny and the like over the years. The last issue had an original Poul Anderson article (which I had bought for my book, EXPLORING FANTASY WORLDS and which Poul graciously let me run in the fanzine first), and the next issue will feature a reprint of a Hoy Ping Pong con report from a 1934 WONDER STORIES (this was several years before there were conventions) with a word of explanation by Bob Tucker. Also, Stephen Leigh on Mervyn Peake and Sontag Sucharitkul and Phineas Phundament have promised material. Back issues of PROCRASTINATION, I might mention, are beginning to command high prices from rare book dealers (on account of the big names obviously -- I do not flatter myself that much ...) I have seen them going for \$10-15.00 a copy.

In recent years, publication has gotten so infrequent that I don't sell subscriptions anymore. It's more of a series of onesots. I have trouble getting letters of comment because all the old participants have either gaffiated or become big-time pros (like Lisa Tuttle). The pro writer who still cares about fanzines is a member of a vanishing breed.

SFR: I read THE WHITE ISLE in the short WEIRBOOK (#9, 1975)

version but I understand it was expanded somewhat when it was serialized in 1980 in FANTASTIC. Will it be expanded again for a Starblaze edition any time soon?

SCHWEITZER: It is more than "something" expanded in the FANTASTIC version. THE WEIRBOOK text is about 10,000 words long. THE FANTASTIC text is 53,000, more than five times as long. The whole last installment is the story of the daughter, which is synopsized in a page and a half in the WEIRBOOK version. When I wrote the original, I simply did not have adequate control of technique to write the story to the length it demanded, or anything like it. The short version is compressed, turgid, synoptic. The material was sufficiently better than the



writing that it stuck in my mind until I could go back and rework it somewhat to my satisfaction. When it appeared in FANTASTIC, five years after its completion, I hadn't read it in several years and was in for some rude shocks. I was also pleased by parts I had forgotten. The FANTASTIC text, while far, far superior to the WEIRBOOK version, is still pretty crude. In the rewrite I am going to go through and remove and rephrase all the clumsy lines. I will also try to make certain scenes more vivid. But this will be a much lighter revision. I will leave the body of it pretty much alone and just do external trimmings. You can get a pretty good idea of what the final book

will be like from the serial, but the final book will be better. It's supposed to be my next book from Starblaze. I hope it will be this year, but I'm not holding my breath.

SFR: Stylistically, at least, the WEIRBOOK version of THE WHITE ISLE is in the Dunsany tradition -- was this just an exercise in technique or were you under the Dunsany influence as much as Lovecraft was at one point in his career?

SCHWEITZER: Dunsany would never have written anything that bad. But the synoptic/legendary method of narration of the thing is something I learned from Dunsany, who used it to better effect in short fables and wonder tales. I don't know if I was using this as a crutch, but I think so. It's a mode of narration -- which you will also find in most medieval literature -- which doesn't require really developed scenes or characters. It enabled me to write and sell occasionally decent stories (like "The Story of Obbok") before I really had much control of conventional narrative technique. Nowadays I can write that way when I choose, rather than because I don't know any other way. Of course, I was under Dunsany's influence at the time, but it doesn't show as much in "The White Isle" as in some things I wrote a little earlier.

By the way, one of the classical beginner's mistakes you'll see in the WEIRBOOK version of THE WHITE ISLE is affectively archaic language, down to and including "thee and thou" dialogue. I had enough sense to keep the dialogue simple, to stay out of complicated tenses, lest I end up sounding like a medieval version of Tonto (to borrow LeGuin's example), but I changed all this in the FANTASTIC version. The title is being changed to GOD OF DARKNESS, PRINCE OF LIGHT.

SFR: Finally, let's get to your new book, THE SHATTERED GODDESS, which just came out in a quality paperback from Starblaze. I understand there was a six-month delay in production due to a screwup on the part of the proofreader. Care to expound on the evils of wayward proofreaders?

SCHWEITZER: I can't tell you Meddling Moron stories the way John Brunner can. I have yet to lose my innocence in that regard. But the book was delayed for two months because it was given to the wrong copyeditor (not proofreader;

they are different) who was a fussy old biddy who objected to even non-standard usage. Fortunately she made her objections with stick-on labels, which publishers call "flags." Hank Stine merely tore them off. Starblaze is an ideal publisher as far as leaving your text alone.

Everything they've published has been as I wrote it. At the same time, they don't seem to do much in-house proofreading (as opposed to the way George Scithers does it: at AMAZING once a story is in page-proofs, one copy is proofread in-house, one is sent to a freelance proofreader and one is sent to the author; then all three are merged), so the only thing standing between the work and utter chaos is the author. They correct every error you find, and they don't generate new ones, but if you miss one, it goes into the finished book. So you have to be good. Let me give you a piece of advice: Always be especially careful about the parts of the book you think are especially good. You will tend to gloss over these sections, distracted by your own genius. Also the Law of General Perversity states that the worst errors will always occur there. Go over such sections several times. After you've read the whole book for sense, then go over the chapters out of order, or even backwards, so that you will only read them line-by-line.

The real delays in publication seem to be caused by the fact that Starblaze exists in a slightly different universe from the rest of us, and time moves at a different rate there. GODDESS was on the B. Dalton's computer list for May, 1982. It came out in January, 1983. But Hank is making strides in closing the gap between announced publication date and the real one.

On the subject of typos, all readers of WE ARE ALL LEGENDS should turn to page 95. In the first line of verse at the bottom, change "my" to "the." On page 140, first line of the second paragraph, change "side" to "night," as in "On the fourth night, led by my vision," etc. These are the two typos (both of which I missed) which affect sense. There are others, but nothing serious.

SFR: Like LEGENDS, THE SHATTERED GODDESS begins with the evil machinations of a witch, and of course the witch is the central Dark Power in GODDESS. Is the witch of special importance to you as a writer of fantasy?

SCHWEITZER: First, let me point out that the witch at the beginning of WE ARE ALL LEGENDS is not evil, but a victim of a malign God and rather pathetic, for all her superficial ferocity. She may be a tool of the devil as well, but I don't see her as evil by herself. Julian gives in to her out of compassion ultimately, or at least he thinks he does.

But to address the more general question, if we set aside the possibility that I am completely mad or that it's all a Freudian id-projection of my mother, I can only say that the Hag figure is only one of several of the great archetypes I used repeatedly. I think a writer's storytelling instincts draw him to those images and figures which have power. Why



they have power is not something we can easily explain.

I will, however, offer my amateur psychological theory, which is that the hag/witch figure is more commonly written about by heterosexual male writers. The sexual element in horror fiction is obvious, and we are frank and deliberate about it these days. Taking the figure of woman and making her a figure of dread and repulsion is more horrifying to the heterosexual writer than to the homosexual one, who couldn't care less. It would be interesting to see a study done to determine if this is actually true. In any case, the even broader appeal

of the Decrepit Anima Figure, as in fairytales, probably comes from the recognition of the hag/witch as a perverted version of the maternal woman. Hence wicked stepmothers, witches who shove kiddies into ovens, etc.

SFR: Why does the witch have no name?

SCHWEITZER: See page one: "She had long since given up her name to the darkness because of her hatred for the holy city of Ai Han-lo ..."

In the most primitive, magical sense, your name is your most important possession, a thing of power, and the very last thing you would give up. But the witch has been wholly consumed and dehumanized by her hatred -- to the point that she no longer even has human motivations, but becomes part of larger, abstract forces -- and therefore is without a name.

SFR: Much of GODDESS reads like very vivid nightmares. Is that what they were in fact -- your own nightmares externalized?

SCHWEITZER: No, I don't have very interesting dreams, really. They are usually mundane in subject matter and rather innocuous, if I remember them at all. The other morning, right on the verge of awakening, I dreamed that I was on a radio talk show with someone who had only the most superficial ideas of what science fiction was about, and proceeded to produce a "typical" plot which was the sort of dumb gimmick devoid of story values that all editors reject in a minute. So I proceeded to make up a science fiction plot off the cuff, which I was able to remember upon awakening. It had to do with a discontented young man who joins the army in search of adventure. This entails getting his brain transplanted into a cyborg machine which is sent interstellar distances. Such transplants are as routine as tooth fillings are today, and completely reversible when the time of service is up. Unfortunately, his body gets misfiled. There may be a sinister conspiracy. I woke up because I figured out what the resolution was. Gee, if I can plot SF in my sleep, why can't I write more of it?

But I never have fantastic dreams, alas. I have occasionally experienced that surreal disorientation of dreaming that I have awakened, and then having to carefully analyze my surroundings to determine if this is the real

world or not. I guess the closest things I have to fantastic dreams are closer to Phil Dick's books than my own. The "dream-like" qualities of my own may have picked up some of the techniques of transition and juxtaposition from dreams, but are otherwise conscious and practised. Did Salvador Dalí dream of dripping clocks or did he just paint that way?

SFR: Lovecraft, of course, often wrote directly from his dreams. Is this peculiar to fantasy writers, do you think?

SCHWEITZER: You're thinking of that sub-species of agonized, lonely writer who has terrific migraines. Edward Lucas White was the clearest example of this. He wrote all his horror stories directly from his migraine-induced dreams. Lovecraft wrote some of his. I don't think Dunsany did, although he had (apparently) migraines. Lee Weinstein has been doing some research along these lines. Apparently migraines produce terrific nightmares which, if one is literarily inclined, can be turned into very strange stories. But while I am heir to all the bodily ills of mankind as much as anyone else is, we are each of us heir to some more than others, and I no more experience with migraine headaches (and the resultant nightmares) than I do with hayfever.

Sure, some writers use dreams, and I'd think they would be of more use to a science fiction or fantasy writer than to a realistic one. I don't. The stereotype now of the profoundly unhappy soul, like Poe or White, who has these terrible nightmares which he vents in his stories. I'm not like that. Do you think it would help my career if I became more maladjusted?

SFR: Death and resurrection is a central theme in GODDESS and much of your other work. What is it about the subject that fascinates you?

SCHWEITZER: This is a hard one to answer, really. It's been said that love and death are the two things worth writing about. Today it might be love and death and video games, but I am too stingy to spend that many quarters learning how to play, that I am left with love and death.

Transcendence and/or resurrection beyond death makes up the core appeal of most religions and mystical systems. It is very basic to the human psyche, and today it is seldom dealt with except in fantasy fiction. Religions tend

to trivialize it. (At least American versions of present religions. Let me not make sweeping statements.) In fantasy fiction you can use such subject matter in an aesthetic way without doctrine or belief getting in the way. (If I believed the kind of stuff I wrote I would be a mystic occultist. One of the reasons I'm not is that I can make that sort of thing up better than the occultists can.) And you might as well use fantasy fiction to cover subjects it is inherently suited to, rather than more ordinary things, like capture and escape adventures or the politics of imaginary countries.

SFR: But must Transcendence be so painful? Ginna in GODDESS, like a lot of your other characters, sure takes a lot of punishment.

SCHWEITZER: I have always been afraid my characters might go on strike and demand better treatment. But in this case, it very much has to do with the theme of the book. Ginna's transcendence is not something he ever asked for or desired. It is something he failed to avoid, since he and everyone else in the book is caught up in a vast movement of forces too large for anyone to comprehend or control. The direct analogy is to the historical process, which works like that, save that it is a bit more comprehensible.

Also it wouldn't be much of a novel if everything was nice and pleasant and easy. Besides, many of the people who have had a kind of transcendence (or religious magnification) forced upon them in the past have not often had an easy time of it. At. Anthony, for instance.

SFR: Is GODDESS a sort of crypto-Christian allegory on the resurrection theme?

SCHWEITZER: No, for all that there are direct Biblical allusions in it, such as the climactic chapter ending "In the end was the Word," the book is not an allegory at all, and it is, if anything, a sort of reverse image of Christianity. The mythology of it may be a little closer to the religions of Asia or the ancient Mediterranean world. It is very different from Christianity. There is no active God outside the universe running things. Instead, the universe generates deities periodically the way the South Atlantic generates hurricanes. I think of them as

swirling masses of holiness which settle on a person quite at random and then carry him or her beyond all humanity. I was, I suppose, thinking of various religious figures throughout history, who were dragged from their ordinary lives without being consulted first and suddenly made into something very different.

Did Joan of Arc ask for what happened to her? Did she ask God for a couple of saints and angels to talk to? Mohammed had reached a comfortable middle age as a camel driver when *wham!* it happened. I guess only the Buddha really wanted the job. He was discontented, and went out to sit under the bo tree until enlightenment came or he was arrested for loitering. If you take a cockeyed fatalistic view of things, and assume blind forces of the universe at work rather than a benevolent deity, these people are propelled along the way many other figures in history are, and are probably not pleased with the idea. But then no one asked them, because there was no one to do the asking. So you might say THE SHATTERED GODDESS is an exercise in speculative religion. It encompasses Christianity (in that it takes place after the death of God and several of his successors), but only as part of a larger and quite alien scheme. In fact, in the first draft there was a mention, which somehow didn't make it into the final, of a god of the remote past who had died on a kind of tree.

SFR: I know you have a prequel to THE SHATTERED GODDESS in the works, since I've seen a couple of the stories that will go into it -- "The Story of a Dador" in the June 1982 AMAZING and "Holy Fire" in the latest WEIRDBOOK (#17). How soon will it be before this volume becomes a Starblaze book?

SCHWEITZER: Real soon now, to coin a phrase. No, seriously, I hope this will be my 1984 Starblaze book. It isn't really a prequel, but a collection of linked stories in the same setting, sharing some of the thematic matter but (so far) none of the characters. The ending of THE SHATTERED GODDESS rather precludes sequels.

SFR: Both "Story of a Dador" and "Holy Fire" deal with the concept of the dador -- the artificial being which a magician creates, using parts of his own body in the process. Where did this idea originate?

**SCHWEITZER:** That post office box in Poughkeepsie where all writers' ideas originate. Other than that, there is the creative distortion of the Tibetan idea of the tulku which I encountered in THE SUPER-HUMAN EXPLOITS OF GESAR OF LING, which is sort of a Tibetan ILIAD. Imagine what reading the ILIAD would be like if you were utterly ignorant of Greek mythology. As it turned out, I completely misunderstood what a tulku is supposed to be anyway, so what I was deliberately distorting and using as a basis for the dadar was in a sense my creation anyway. Beyond that, I see it as a metaphor for all-consuming hatred. Hatred is a very wasteful emotion. It can completely fill up your life, consume you, often without having much effect on the person toward whom your malice is supposedly directed. I literalised this. Etash Wesa, the multiple-amputee wizard, is so far gone this way that he can never regain his humanity. So is the witch at the beginning of THE SHATTERED GODDESS.

**SFR:** Somewhere you've commented that "The Story of a Dadar" is your best story -- why do you think so?

**SCHWEITZER:** Because it has what seems to be convincing characterizations of middle-aged people, for one thing. So middle-aged readers have told me. It is so much easier to write about ages you have been than ages you have not. Also adolescence is easy to write about because adolescents often change quickly and radically, and a story often requires some sort of character change to give it direction. I decided to have middle-aged characters this time because too many stories in the series have young ones and I thought that this would make ECHOES OF THE GODDESS rather monotonous. But I am extremely pleased by the way the story came out. It is one that has aroused a strong emotional response in such readers as I've met. (Unfortunately that issue of AMAZING received no letters of comment at all.) I think the idea of the story is striking and works out pretty well, with enough complexity to maintain the character's feeling of nightmare helplessness but not enough to lose the reader. And the story does explain the Meaning of Life at the end, non-frivolously this time. Basically, I think it is the story of mine which best embodies some of my repeated themes, and it is one with strong imagery, much grotesquerie, but real, living characters. I can only tell people to

go read it. I am afraid I am not at my most convincing when explaining how good I am. That's AMAZING, June 1982. You can get the back issue from the current publisher. See the ad in the July 1983 issue.



**SFR:** What is happening in the fantasy field today that you find the most interesting or original? Is there a new direction and/or dimension about to happen?

**SCHWEITZER:** It's hard to tell. It may be going to Hell in a bucket. When I made my random survey of current fantasy novels for my SFR column, I definitely got the impression that standards are down sharply. As genrefiction sets in, publishers demand product. We have a whole subspecies of fantasy which is analogous to women's historical romances. Many are pseudo-medieval Harlequin Romances. For someone used to classic fantasy, this is thin gruel indeed.

But I am encouraged by the expansion of the market, both in the novel area and for short

stories. Now at least, if someone chances to write a really good piece of work, the chances of it getting published, even if the writer is unknown and the book is wildly eccentric, are much better. An established commercial genre often provides a kind of bottom-line protection which makes risk-taking easier than in say, the Best Seller field.

In short fiction there seems to be a shift away from small press magazines toward major professional outlets, as more major professional outlets come into existence. In time this may spell the doom of the small press magazine or reduce it to a proving ground for beginners. It hasn't yet, but I am seeing more top grade stuff in the professional markets, which means that it is not appearing in the little ones. The new magazine, IMAGO, may have a tremendous impact, as would a revived FANTASTIC.

I suppose the best fantasy short story I've read in recent years to come from within the commercial genre was Somtow Sucharitkul's "Fire From the Wine-Dark Sea," which is a brilliant story balanced right on the edge of a kind of existential absurdity and all the more beautiful for it. From outside the genre, "The Book of Sand" by Jorge Luis Borges, and for best collection, the book of the same title. There haven't been a lot of good novels, but FREDY'S BOOK by John Gardner was outstanding. Of course there's THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER and sequels, but those are arguably science fiction.

I don't see any new direction. I see an invasion of lazy writers who would be writing something else if it were more commercial. Fantasy is only just now becoming a field, rather than just a type of literary expression which can turn up anywhere. Perhaps it will begin to develop the way science fiction has. Science fiction was around for at least a century before Gernsback, but it was only after the end of the 1920s that there were writers who were aware of themselves as being part of a science fiction field. By the early 1940s a second generation had arisen, the first generation raised within this field. This profoundly affected later developments, for better and for worse. For all fantasy has been around for millennia, this process may be just beginning.

**SFR:** Thank you, Darrell Schweitzer.

# RAISING HACKLES

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

## THE OLD FLOAT GAME

What's a "float?" And how is it screwing writers?

A big hint. It's not an ice cream confection.

It's a ripoff -- that's what C.T. Conover, Comptroller of the Currency, testified before a Congressional committee on banking that the banks are making a profit on the "float." Banking spokesmen disagreed saying that the "float" is necessary because of the processing charges banks undergo. Committee members promised action on Conover's request to stop the "float."

Again, what is a "float?" And how is it screwing writers? A float is the period of time between when you deposit a check into your local bank and the time the bank credits the deposit to your account. This should take at most a matter of two to three business days, if the check is out-of-state; if the check is in-state or local, then it should take less than a business day. A lot of banks are taking anywhere from five to ten business days to credit your account. For this period of time the bank earns all of the interest on the check, not the customer. Now while the amount of interest lost per customer is minuscule, once all of that interest from all of the customers is added up it amounts to a near billion-dollar windfall for the banks. They maintain they need the revenues generated from the float to cover the handling charges inherent in the processing of the check, despite the fact that they charge most customers exorbitant handling and processing charges already, plus the money they make on loaning out customers' money to borrowers.

How it affects writers is that the publishing industry has its own version of the old float game. Their version robs writers of not pennies in interest, but thousands of dollars and causes untold misery.

How it operates is easily unnoticed and viciously simple. The object is to keep as much of the money promised the writer as long as possible. It starts with the glorious announcement by the writer's agent that ConglomPubIntl has just accepted the latest in the Jerk Jockstrap: Barbarian Scientist series. They're offering six-thousand and an advance against a 5% royalty share on the first two-million copies sold and 5 1/2 on any thereafter. The writer excitedly waits as the days, weeks and months pass by. Then finally the contract arrives, the writer signs it (never mind the slave clause binding her/him to ConglomPubIntl for eternity) and sends it back that same day -- express mail or Federal Express if he/she has the money.

Then the Long Wait begins. A month passes, then two. No word. Never mind that it should only take two weeks to send the check out, or that the writer has had to sell the family car and hock three valuable heirlooms in order to pay the rent, keep the electricity on, not to mention food. Finally, after three phone calls to the agent, the first third of the advance comes in.

Months after publication it is time for the semi-annual royalty statements. No check. Half a year later, no check. Finally, nine months later a check for half of the royalties owed arrives (the rest is being held as a reserve against returns, as has been the case on every royalty statement on every book for the last seven years).

Now in the hypothetical example above, the monies cumulatively withheld over a period of a year probably do not amount to more than ten-thousand dollars. So the interest earned on that money by the publisher is not very large, although it is money that should rightfully belong to the writer. So even though the money on an individual basis is small, consider that an average paperback house putting

out over thirty titles a month probably has in excess of three-hundred writers that they've withheld a similar amount of monies from and you begin to see that they have a considerable interest (sorry) in paying the writer as little and as late as they can.

What can be done? Well, you can insist on clauses in your contract specifying exactly when the various monies are due, but unless your name is Robert Ludlum, Isaac Asimov or Arthur C. Clarke -- in most cases you won't have much success.

The facts are that most writers are routinely savaged by the very publishers that they help to make profitable and that every writer is sure to be screwed at some time in his career by a publisher, and that the industry on the whole is to blame.

Now there are some apologists who maintain that because certain banks put out advertisements at royalty time pointing out the fact that they have money to lend shows that the publishers don't actually mean to screw over writers, it is just that they are short on cash. Well, if that's the case then it's a marvel indeed that so many have managed to survive so long in such a capital intensive industry. The fact is most of the publishing companies today are subsidiaries of very large conglomerates who certainly have more than enough capital to cover royalty payments.

What a lot of people in the publishing industry don't realize, or don't want to face, is the incredible human misery the float system causes among writers. The stress about worrying where your next meal is coming from, or rent



payment, etc. has led to all types of personal and financial illnesses among writers -- from ulcers to divorce, bankruptcy and in several noted cases, suicide.

Well, that's the old float game, and it doesn't come in root beer or cherry cola. It's usually located in the hardware section under screws.

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#### MINI-REVIEWS

If you get a chance, pick up **THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION** edited by Gardner Dozois (Bluejay Books, Trade Paperback, \$9.95). It is a massive anthology at 250,000+ words and the size gives Dozois the room to include the longer novellas and novelettes that are often left out of shorter Best anthologies.

Especially powerful stories are "Cicada Queen" by Bruce Sterling and "Hardfought," Greg Bear's Nebula Award-winning novella. Among the many other memorable stories are "Slow Birds" by Ian Watson and "Gemstone" by Vernor Vinge. The only best-of-the-year anthology that deserves to be called the definitive best of the year.

Also available is Terry Carr's **UNIVERSE 14** (Doubleday, \$11.95), featuring a powerful operating novella by Kim Stanley Robinson, "The Lucky Strike," whose politics I found abominable but the power of the story overrode my disagreements. A provocative story with a very moving ending, it's about an alternate world where the A-bombing of Hiroshima didn't go as planned. Also contributing excellent stories are Gregory Benford, Robert Silverberg and seven other fine writers.

**ISAAC ASIMOV'S WONDERFUL WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION: Volume 2 THE SCIENCE FICTIONAL OLYMPICS**, is a reprint anthology that's of topical interest this summer, edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg and Charles G. Waugh (Signet, \$3.50).

Also available is **STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK** by Vonda M. McIntyre (Pocket, \$2.95), the only writer I know who can take fairly standard science fiction movie fare and elevate it to the level and intensity of some of the best of written SF. As usual the best parts of the novel are the background material where Vonda has a free hand. I wished they'd let her write the script for one of the upcoming movies; I'm sure it would be something special.

#### MUSINGS:

# On censorship, nothing new. Thanks to all who inquired about a legal fund, in particular those who offered their time, support and money. Unfortunately, I don't have the time necessary. Currently, the major campaign of censorship that I and others expected hasn't materialized, although reports continue to come in of minor and scattered attempts. Any further developments I'll update here.

# Interesting conversation with an employee of a major bookstore chain. It seems that this particular chain has decided to not hire "book people" anymore. Instead, they will hire people with retail experience. The reasoning is that "book people" aren't aggressive enough in selling books. You know, the shy retiring reader bullshit.

Well, this policy has led to some interesting results; a horror story is currently making the rounds among the older employees of this particular chain: An individual went into one of the chain's stores and asked one of the new retail-experienced clerks where he could find a copy of **MERCHANT OF VENICE**. The new clerk asked what type of book it was! The customer explained it was a play by Shakespeare; the clerk asked, "Who's Shakespeare?"

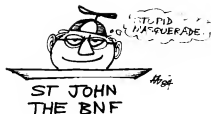
Yep, I'm afraid Norman Spinrad was right when he mentioned that publishing would eventually go the way of the automobile where there would be three companies and dozens of imprints. Except it's happening on the retail end, not the publishing end. This dumping of knowledgeable clerks for ignorant flashy "used car salesmen" can only further harm the reader and the new writer. It's just depressing as hell.

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**SCIENCE FICTION AND POLITICS: NAIVE BALONEY** (OR MADNESS IN RIVER CITY or A Panel That Raised My Hackles)

I just arrived from my final day at the 1984 Westcon (the convention itself runs for two more days -- at least, but I've had enough, thank you very much).

Boy howdy folks what a "fun" time I had. I knew I was in trouble when Friday night the NBC affiliate station in Portland ran an interview with one noted guest of the convention. The person started talking about how the world needed religious, economic and social change (or some such thing) and how Science Fiction was the literature that could do it. Naive Baloney.



Things went downhill from there. The next day I was on a panel entitled "The Future of Government." Hey, I thought, this'll be interesting. An opportunity to talk about the future and all the interesting types of social structures possible. What type of government would human settlers on a multiple star system have? Would it be different from ours? Why? How will spacelife affect government? If we have the type of space habitats that the LS Society and the writings of Gerard K. O'Neill envision, what type of government will that necessitate? Interesting questions. Did the panel get to any of those? Of course not.

For a while at the start the panelists outnumbered the audience. Finally enough people struggled in that we started (probably the Ellison panel let out a little late -- never do a panel opposite Harlan Ellison -- you won't have an audience). The panelists started out making general comments about how they viewed government. So far no problems. Then one panelist who had, I later found out, packed half the audience with his cronies, started on this loooooong monologue about how we, in the United States, needed a Constitutional Convention every hundred years or so, and how he had just the proposal. You see, it'd all be done by computer! The computer'd select some people, who'd select some people, etc. etc. Naive Baloney.

NOT ONLY WILL IT FIND AN HONEST MAN, BUT YOU CAN LOWER THE GAIN TO FIND A POLITICIAN THAT WILL STAY BOUGHT!



I tried to point out when I could squeeze in a word edgewise, that the U.S. doesn't need a Constitutional Convention. That such an event could result in all of our laws being changed, such a system was ripe for corruption and selling of votes to the highest bidder, or that a small group could rig things so that they ended up controlling the Convention. I finished by saying that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." I figured there'd more or less be tacit agreement with my position and the panel'd go on to other items.

Hah! Foolish me. No sirreee. The audience, or should I say mob, yowled for my head. I was branded a fanatic for wanting to stick with this obviously corrupt, imperialistic form of government. When I pointed out that if an individual felt that the U.S. was so bad, he could always go to a totalitarian country like the USSR and then make up his mind, I was promptly informed that the USSR was not a totalitarian state, only a socialist state. There were numerous murmurs of agreement from the audience. Boy, was I shocked! A history lesson at the last place I expected -- a Science Fiction Convention in River City, Portland, Oregon.

Downhill. I questioned the panelist who suggested the Constitutional Convention, pointing out that it could be rigged. Impossible, he said. There are a billion dollars worth of crime committed each year via the computer, I replied; computers can be rigged. Oh, no, he and several of his lackeys from the audience chorused: a computer random decision could never be rigged.

At this point I should have realized I was outnumbered, shut up and let them have their fun (I had had four hours sleep the night before, I had a splitting headache and I was pissed). I continued to say that there was no sensible reason why any sane person would allow somebody to monkey around with the Constitution. One of the lackeys from the audience who murmured the loudest upholding the notion of Russia not being totalitarian, started yelling from the back of the room that I didn't trust the common people. I pointed out that our current Constitution which has stood us in good shape for two centuries was designed by people who were not common -- unless he wanted to claim that Jefferson, Madison and Washington were common -- or that others among this country's founders such as Franklin, Hamilton, Samuel Adams, etc. were common people. He screamed, "You just don't trust the people!" I replied that I have no problem with people, I just don't



trust mob rule, and neither did the signers of the Constitution.

The panel was winding down at about that time. I said in closing that a computer could be doctored so that, for example, only the Socialist Worker's Party members would end up being chosen (at this point several in the audience glared at me) and that I had nothing against the people, only those who would impose a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and that I didn't want a generation of people, minds addled by TV, making the laws under which I would have to live.

After the meeting broke up, one of the people who had been heckling me from the audience came up to me in the hallway outside and hissed, "When we take over, you'll be one of the first to go," then promptly turned and walked away.

Right.

Other than that panel I mostly had a good time at the Convention. The Westerncon deserves credit for a well-run Con and an incredible program book.

#### ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED-----

out into the room at least ten inches and provide a cooking surface, and one with a forced-air blower. (A woodstove would be too intrusive for the livingroom, though it might be a tad more efficient.)

I'll have my Sears credit account paid off and will have cut The Card into bits.

I look forward to a lot of reading! God, the books I have in the back of my mind I want to read!

And---not least!---I expect to buy two Security Doors for the house; the kind made of steel and with double dead-bolt locks, the kind you have to unlock from the inside as well as the outside. Our neighbors (having been robbed 4 times in the past six years) have these doors now and recently an attempted forced entry was prevented by these doors. The turmoil and economic dislocation and desperation coming in 1985-6 and onward make this kind of security system necessary, I fear. (We already have steel grids and decorative wrought-iron bars on the windows.)

We are living in interesting times. I find it not a curse, but a joy.

#### MY "IN" BASKET IS OVERFLOWING...

Which explains why I forgot to write Charles Platt to remind him (after he had the courtesy and concern to ask) when the deadline was for this issue. He wrote on June 14. Gaaaaaaa! Wormwood and gall! The bitter taste of neglect of duty! So now you know why Charles Platt's column isn't in this issue.

The absence of Bob Shaw's column is another matter:

'I'm really sorry about screwing up on only the second installment of my column.

'What happened was that I developed a nasty lung infection (possibly a hangover from the flu I mentioned earlier) which put me out of action for about three weeks, and it made a complete bollix of my work and fan schedules.'

Bob must have caught the miserable long-lasting flu I had about the same time...or I his. Fan writers stick together in many mysterious ways.

ONE MORE NOTE ON THE ECONOMY, THEN I'LL LEAVE IT ALONE FOR...AH...UM... THREE MONTHS.

Consumer debt is on a 'scary' upsurge. After increases of \$6.61 billion in February, \$5.87 in March, and \$6.41 in April, the May increase was \$10.23 billion, an all-time record increase.

In the mid-'70s an average increase was \$320 million per month, and \$750 was considered 'scary'.

Currently, obviously, this credit/debt rampage is continuing; look at the June-July new car sales rate.

In March of this year new car loans were at \$326 million. In April they surged to \$2.16 billion. In May the spurge reached \$3.69 billion.

# OTHER VOICES

## ECOTOPIA EMERGING

By Ernest Callenbach  
Bantam, 1982, 337 pp., \$3.50

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

A prequel to the earlier ECOTOPIA (1977), this is a far superior and more enjoyable novel. The story takes place in the Pacific Northwest where many are interested in building a society based on ecology, self-reliance, small instead of large, and recycling of all reusable resources.

The novel tells the stories of many characters in this setting: The young inventor who wishes to share her efficient solar cell with the world and not make profits off it, the politician who envisions a different future and founds a new political party to lead the way, the four partners who begin a successful contracting business in solar energy, the cancer victims who strike back against those who created the carcinogens they believe are killing them.

The goals of the characters do not coincide with those of the U.S. and many of its corporations, so conflict develops. Utility companies oppose the development of an efficient, home-made solar cell, Washington fears the political (subversive?) movement. The people respond through political actions, economic changes, lifestyle alterations and some through paramilitary efforts. In each instance, emphasis is placed on character development.

I grew to like the people in this novel, and while not always in agreement with them, to respect their beliefs and I hope they would feel the same about me. The world they are creating would be a most exciting one.

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## LAMMAS NIGHT

By Katherine Kurtz  
Ballantine, 438 pp., \$3.50

REVIEWED BY ALMA JO WILLIAMS

Forty years after the demise of the Thousand Year Reich, books on Nazism are flourishing. The newest in line of reporting on the occult deeds of Hitler and his hid-

eous henchmen (just can't resist alliterations!) is Katherine Kurtz of Deryni fame.

England has always and still is renowned for her population of witchy mystics. Kurtz begins with the premise that such do exist and do have certain powers and runs it from the Battle of Dunkirk to the sudden dismantling of Operation Sealion, Hitler's plan for the British Invasion.

Kurtz has wrought a fascinating story. I just wish her characters had more depth and emotion and that she could have made me really care what happened to them.

Sir John Graham, employed by the government in its "psychic operation section" accidentally discovers that he and William, Royal Prince of the Old Blood, fifth in line to inherit the throne, have been psychically attached throughout history in the persona of William the Conqueror, Becket, etc., each of whom was slain by a trusted friend, supposedly for political reasons but actually to fulfill the 7 year cycle of the death and resurrection of the Sacred King, whose blood keeps England fertile and safe. (This Kind is of the Old Gods of Nature). Legend has it that Sir Francis Drake was a warlock and convened a Grand Covenant to call up the winds that wrecked the Spanish Armada. Graham and his group wish to do the same for Operation Sealion. They unwillingly have drawn

Prince William into their scheme and a human sacrifice may be needed to counter Hitler's Black Adept, one of the Old Royal Blood.

The premise, although unscientific, is sound logic and the ending leaves one wondering if the sacrifice was really needed -- if the invasion would have been dismantled without it, as that occurred within hours after the deed was done. Did Sir John lose friends and family in a needless effort or was the Black Magic of the Occult Adept focused upon him as revenge? Read it and think.

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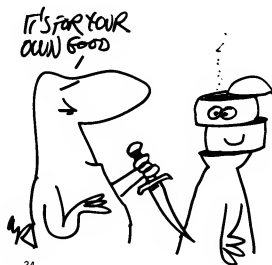
## TSUNAMI

By Crawford Kilian  
Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver B.C.  
1983, 218 pp., hardcover, \$16.95  
ISBN: 0-88894-366-0

REVIEWED BY KEITH SOLTYS

TSUNAMI shares the same setting as the author's earlier novel ICEQUAKE but is not a direct sequel. Sometime in the near future the core of the sun has gone out. The ozone layer has been wiped out by solar flares. Whites risk almost instant sunburn and blindness from the high ultraviolet levels.

The story begins where ICEQUAKE left off, with the melting of the Antarctic icecap and the protagonist





on the Bay Bridge in San Francisco watching a tsunami roll over the Golden Gate. The wave wreaks havoc on a city already damaged by recession and food and energy shortages. The crew of an oceanographic vessel try to organize a mission to salvage the oil from a sunken tanker. Kilian intercuts their story with that of a group of Hollywood movie people who set up a stronghold much like that in Niven and Pournelle's LUCIFER'S HAMMER. In their struggle to survive they develop into a quasi-feudal fiefdom fighting the oceanographers for the oil.

Kilian paints a grim and all too plausible picture of a society brought to its knees by a series of natural disasters. Yet he's created characters who refuse to give up hope. Like some of Heinlein's characters they are ordinary people thrust into abnormal situations; people who discover that they may die but at least they are going to die trying.

The scope of this novel isn't as wide as Kilian's previous novel EYAS. Like that book it shares the author's eye for detail and strong characterization. Kilian is a writer worth reading and TSUNAMI is a cut above the usual hackwork that characterizes the disaster novel genre.

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# THE OMNI FUTURE ALMANAC

Edited by Robert Weil  
Foreword by Ben Bova  
Omni Press (Harcourt Books) \$11.95

REVIEWED BY KARL EDD

This 319-page almanac details future probabilities in science. It is a valuable reference for the sci-fi writer or dedicated SF reader. One interesting item was the projected diagnosis of diseases by clumping or non-clumping or monoclonal (genetically engineered) antibodies. Medical and biology students will immediately see the analogy to gram-positive, gram-negative aniline dye tests now used on bacteria. A variant of the monoclonal technique was used to track down Legionella pneumophila, Legionnaires' Disease. There has already been a TV special on monoclonal antibody technique, and it is predicted that the technique will soon revolutionize the entire practice of medicine.

Cancer vaccine will soon be produced. England now produces a vaccine for at least two specific cancers. Also, cancer-killer

cells have been produced by the monoclonal technique. Another TV special dealt with an industrial engineer who spent \$28,000.00 for killer-cell treatment of lymphoma (related to Hodgkins Disease) and in two years he had full remission. One drawback to the proposed cancer vaccine is that a woman who uses it will never be able to bear children. She will abort, as a child is, medically, a tumor.

Memory restoration is in store for the elderly. Vasopressin or physostigmine work right now -- produce a memory flood -- but certain neurological side effects must be controlled before the treatment will be publicly released.

Electrophoresis field diagnosis will replace the CAT-scanner in medicine. Gel-protein "fingerprints" of various diseases are now being charted and fed into a computer data base.

You will live to be at least 130 years old by means of triglyceride control. Electro-healing will produce new feet and hands for amputees. (We are on the threshold of this technique right now. The technique is being developed in a Veterans' Administration hospital.)

A terrible earthquake will soon occur at New Madrid, Missouri. The one there in 1830 was worse than the San Francisco quake. Thousands will die. Newspapers are, naturally, telling local people very little.

The section on vanishing animals will depress animal lovers. (See my companion review of THE FATE OF THE EARTH. You won't really have to worry.)

There are now 11,000,000 lepers in the world. We will soon have many more. Leprosy bacteria are beginning to thrive in peat moss.



Italy is now working on and will soon have a design-engineer robot called the Da Vinci model. Public schools will disappear. Corporations will handle schooling of employees' children. Japanese will launch Kamikaze (suicide) satellites, manned by intelligent suicide-programmed robots.

We will know, as a result of space maps of ambient hydrogen atoms, if the Earth and the universe will move ever outward to a cold, eternal death or if all will ultimately contract. The first lawsuit will be filed by an intelligent computer for civil rights and possibly song or book royalties.

Great stuff in this book -- to make you gasp in wonderment or feel depressed, according to your mental makeup.

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THE JOURNEY OF SILAS P. BIGELOW  
By Kenan Heise  
1981, Collage, Inc., 109 pp.

REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

This is a novel of an alternate world, in which the old Northwest Territory of the United States (now the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin) is an independent Indian Nation. This nation was created by the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War in 1783. The purpose of this state was to create a buffer between the U.S. and British-owned Canada and the nation was given the natural boundaries of the Great Lakes and the Ohio and Mische Sebe rivers.

The novel tells the story of Silas Bigelow's travels into the Indian Nation, off limits to outsiders. He visits cities, countryside, meets many people and is quite taken with their simpler

way of life, the relationships of the people, and even the attractive and energy-efficient architecture. As Silas grows as a person and learns to change, the novel builds toward its tragic climax.

While this short, illustrated novel introduces fascinating ideas and possibilities, I found it very tedious to read. Also, I was unable to believe that this nation could have survived 200 years, given our reality and how few treaties with Indian nations have been kept.

While I can't recommend this novel, some readers may find it worthwhile for the concepts introduced.

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1984: SPRING, A CHOICE OF FUTURES  
By Arthur C. Clarke  
Ballantine, Del Rey, 1984, \$14.95

REVIEWED BY KARL EDD

This is an erudite yet interesting collection of Clarke's speeches, articles and personal essays. Using George Orwell's "1984" as a cultural beginning point, Clarke sets forth his own list of future possibilities. (Orwell's book contains 137 future possibilities, and some social analysts believe that about a hundred of these have already occurred.)

Frequently Clarke uses his own writings to illustrate or strengthen a point. In some writers this would be a sign of narcissism but Clarke is a senior statesman of both science and science fiction and his list of unimpeachable credits earns him the right to quote himself as an expert, as he pioneered in so many directions in both fields.

The book breaks down into four sections. These deal with (a) How modern technology and science contribute to international peace and possible eventual brotherhood (b) space exploration (c) science fiction writing and various influences on it (d) personal reminiscences and essays that are every bit as entrancing and informative as any by Ursula Le Guin. They deal much with his life and the island of Sri Lanka (once called Ceylon) where he lives. Scientist Clarke frequently waxes poetically lyrical about his island, and demonstrates a deep concern with the same coral reef and undersea problems that have occupied much of Jacques Cousteau's attention.

Clarke's book contains the thought-wealth of a lifetime, and

is filled with youthful courage. He loves the stars too much to fear the night.

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AGAINST INFINITY  
By Greg Benford  
Pocket Books, 251 pp., \$3.50

REVIEWED BY ROBERT SABELLA

Greg Benford has grown steadily into the complete science fiction writer. He has the rare ability -- perhaps only equalled by Robert Silverberg -- to take the most basic plot and infuse it with new life. And what could be more basic than the story of a group of settlers on Ganymede engaged in a hunt against an ancient creature so alien as to not even recognize their presence, but so huge as to destroy whole settlements unthinkingly?

Benford gives real depth to the harshness of life on Ganymede and explores fully the meaning of the hunt to the settlers. His aliens are real, almost terrifying in their alienness. He examines closely the relationship between the boy-hero Manuel, his father who senses that he is losing the boy to adulthood, and Old Matt, the boy's confidant and partner. It all adds up to what should be an important, powerful novel.

But there is a major flaw in the novel. By page 158 the hunt is over and all three relationships are effectively ended. The remaining two-fifths of the book tells a completely different story of Manuel six years later. After the depth and strength of the first story, it is essentially weak and slow-moving. I can only venture a guess as to Benford's motives for including it. Perhaps he wanted the opportunity to take an objective look at the hunt from the viewpoint of a man who has become emotionally detached from it by both time and maturity. Or more likely, he realized 158-page novels just don't sell.

Whatever his reason, the last two-fifths is anti-climactic to the point of merely passing time until the novel finally ends. But you should not let it deter you from reading the rest of the book. The first three-fifths is extremely good, award-worthy stuff well worth your time and effort.

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THE CREATOR  
By Clifford Simak  
Locust Press, 1981, 78 pp.

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

Truly a seminal work by an acknowledged master of SF, this first novel was reprinted to commemorate Clifford Simak's over fifty years of writing. Originally published in 1932, this edition contains the short novel plus loving appreciations by Asimov, Heinlein, Pohl and Williamson.

Even in this early effort Simak already exhibits the facility to paint those "word pictures" that have earned him the reputation as the pastoral writer of SF. The plot of THE CREATOR holds up amazingly well fifty-three years later. The main character and his friend, young professors of Psychology and Physics at a small college, progress from amiable evening discussions on the nature of time and dreams, through the development of a "consciousness unit" theory to the invention of a machine capable of warping time patterns. Not a time machine in the classic sense, it opens the door to adventures in new realities now available to them.

The science in this novel is not "hard" as we now use the term; neither is it the clumsy type that did find its way into many novels of the era. Above all, Simak respects the reader's intelligence and tries -- convincingly so, I might add -- to make his story believable.



The reader will find this novel's plot throwing off "idea sparks" like the electric generator found in the obligatory lab scene in old monster movies. And many of these sparks can be traced to fables of inspiration that marked Simak's later works. From the vividly realized twilight of humanity in his classic CITY to the dimensional travel in the Hugo-winning short story "The Big Front Yard," the seeds of these ideas are here. The ultimate questions of man's origins and purpose explored more recently in his novels PROJECT POPE and SPECIAL DELIVERANCE can also trace their roots to THE CREATOR.

For the fans of Simak this small book should be required reading; for others interested in the proof of the quality of some early SF it's recommended. The book may be hard to find. The original is out of print and Locus Press only produced 500 copies, primarily distributed at the 39th World Science Fiction Convention. But keep looking. The search will be worth it if you would like to have a front row seat at the lift-off of a remarkable career.

#### THE BEST, WORST, AND MOST UNUSUAL HORROR FILMS

By Darrell Moore  
Beekman House, 1984, 160 pp., \$10  
ISBN: 0-517-40266-8

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL A. MORRISON

Fans of horror films are justifiably wary of oversize, garishly-illustrated surveys. Typically, such books contain semi-literate plot summaries, ill-founded and unsupported opinions, a wealth of factual errors and over-familiar, largely irrelevant stills. This book is very much the exception.

Judging from the text, author Moore is a knowledgeable, literate enthusiast of horror cinema as well as a perceptive critic. He deals with these films thematically -- rather than, say, chronologically or alphabetically. Following two introductory chapters, Moore discusses a large number of films in sensible categories (science horror, mad slasher, satanism, etc.), intelligently juxtaposing comments on films from widely-different periods in order to elucidate their connections. Instead of tiresome plot summaries, thumbnail sketches provide just enough information to back up Moore's critical comments.

The analyses and critical appraisals that comprise the bulk of the text are well-supported by reference to the films, their thematic and historical context, and their

impact on the genre. Moore is a versatile critic, able to write on the complex merits of a masterpiece like ERASERHEAD (1980) and yet appreciate the (limited) virtues of a schlock film like HUMANOID FROM THE DEEP (1980). The quality of his serious commentary is exemplified by his useful brief introduction to the provocative and important films of David Cronenberg. Another high point is his chapter on "unusual" horror films, which broadens the scope of the book, intersecting with the mainstream through films like STRAW DOGS (1971).

Unfortunately, the generally well-chosen stills often overwhelm the text, which because of the books' awkward layout, seems choppy than it is. Some highly abbreviated comments and curious omissions (neither Wise's THE HAUNTING (1963) nor Hough's LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE (1973) are mentioned) lead one to wonder if Moore's manuscript was cut. Indeed, the text's brevity is its main weakness.

#### NAMELESS HORROR



This book contains the seeds of an excellent, up-to-date survey, potentially as valuable as those of Douglas (HORROR!), Macmillan 1966) and Clarens (AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE HORROR FILM, Capricorn, 1967). For now, the present volume is highly recommended. Fans will find much to think and argue about, while general readers will benefit from the perceptive overview and context this book provides.

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#### SHADOWS 6

Edited by Charles L. Grant  
Doubleday, 1983, 180 pp., \$11.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

SHADOWS 6 is an anthology of 16 original dark fantasy tales collected by World Fantasy Award winning Editor Charles L. Grant. As the latest addition to the SHADOWS series, the emphasis this time is on a quiet terror born of uncertainty. Grant has a keen eye for stories that create dread through the development of realistic characters that find their lives slowly dissolving out of focus; until neither the character nor the reader is sure where reality leaves off and unreality begins.

While the more familiar names associated with previous SHADOWS are not here (Stephen King, Ramsey Campbell, Tanith Lee and T.E.D. Klein to name a few past contributors), in this book there is something for every reader's interest. A variety of styles and themes blend together to provide a sampling of the best dark fantasy currently being written. For several authors, this volume represents their first sale; for most it was their first appearance in the series.

The stories in SHADOWS 6 range from the short, short "Sneakers" by Mark Laidlaw, a story about what was thought to be a recurring nightmare turning out to be a horrible reality to the lengthier "The Silent Cradle" by Leigh Kennedy in which a family shares its life with a member who is never really there. As Grant has shown in these selections, the line between darkness and light is always difficult to distinguish and in some cases we might be better off not trying.

Also offered are several interesting variations on well-worn themes including the perennial last human story in which the terror this time is the truly unusual "Peppermint Kisses" by Jesse Osburn. The story "A Last Testament for Nick and the Trooper" by J. Michael Straczynski finds a new way to tell the unwitting release of an evil power story. Pat Cadigan, Editor of SHAYOL fantasy magazine recalls for all of us the power those early childhood games have over children in "Benie, Meenie, Ipsateenie," a story that weaves its fantastic element into the plot so subtly it could have appeared in a mainstream publication.

As has become a tradition with the series, Grant saves the best for last. SHADOWS 6 finishes with the genuinely frightening "But At My Back I Always Hear" by David

Morrell. In this well-done horror story the tension mounts with each paragraph as we meet a middle-aged, painfully normal English professor at a small mid-western college who finds his marriage in jeopardy and his sanity questioned when he is tormented by a former female student who says she hears him calling to her in her head. The standard "unrequited love" story you say? Not quite, since this particular student has been dead for some time.

There are a few weak links along the way in SHADOWS 6 where suspension of belief is never accomplished long enough to support the fantasy. Overall, however, this anthology is well worth a read. The book also contains stories by Lori Allen, Leslie A. Horvitz, Wayne Wightman, Jack Dann, Joe R. Lansdale, Elizabeth Erica Burden, Steve Rasnic Tem, Melissa Hall, Peter D. Pautz and Al Sarrantonio.

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**FLOATING DRAGON**  
By Peter Straub  
Putnam, 1982, 544 pp., \$15.95

REVIEWED BY STUART NAPIER

Peter Straub stretches his considerable talents in horror fiction a little too far in this lengthy tale of terror set in a small Connecticut town. *FLOATING DRAGON* is an ambitious mix of horror with mystical overtones; the author keeps you turning the pages but by the end you realize a lot of the scenes were wonderfully weird yet not essential to the progression of the story.

Straub burst on the horror fiction scene a few years ago with *GHOST STORY* and shortly thereafter proved his staying power with the follow-up hit *SHADOWLAND*. Once again he uses the multiple character technique to add depth and context; unlike Stephen King, however, Straub is not as facile at changing point-of-view and at times the narrative is plodding as the characters strain to make the transition.

*FLOATING DRAGON* involves a toxic gas being released as a result of an industrial accident. Now the "dragon" is airborne and floating towards the trigging of bizarre -- and often grotesque -- horror as it provides the needed vehicle for the resurgence of an evil presence in the affluent community, that has all but forgotten its troubled past.

Reminiscent of King's *THE STAND*, this novel is filled with some of the more imaginative prose you'll find. *FLOATING DRAGON* has plenty

of horror but few good scares; at critical points the believability isn't sufficient to sustain the necessary tension.

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**LORD DARCY**  
By Randall Garrett  
Nelson Doubleday, 600 pp.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT SABELLA

Both The Science Fiction Book Club and The Mystery Guild have been offering this three-in-one volume which, considering their large memberships, should have quite a circulation. It is that rarest of all sub-genres, well-constructed fantasy detective fiction.

The series takes place in an alternate universe where King Richard the Lionhearted was not killed in 1199 but survived and returned to England a wiser man. Somehow he managed to build the Plantagenet line of English kings into a benevolent dynasty that ruled both England and France into modern times. The Renaissance did not see the development of modern technology but rather modern sorcery, a rigorous form of magic which follows strict mathematical logic and is closely supervised by law.

The book contains eight novels as well as the full-length novel *TOO MANY MAGICIANS*, a Hugo nominee some twenty years ago. All are well-constructed mysteries with both suspects and red herrings aplenty to keep the reader guessing. Lord Darcy is described as a genius able to make intuitive leaps in logic that normal people could never make. This is a convenient explanation for the fact that many solutions are too intricate for the reader to possibly guess. Yet they are plausible enough to make you appreciate both Darcy's and the author's cleverness.

There are weaknesses in the book. Perhaps most glaring is the perfect chivalry of all the char-

acters. It seems as if Garrett believes all the good stories about medieval knighthood without accepting any of its darker aspects. The characters would have been slightly more believable if there had been less black-and-white characterization and more shades of grey.

But overall, the book is a pleasant diversion that should keep most readers entertained for several hours. It does no disservice to either the fantasy or mystery genres, but provides a satisfactory blending of both.

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**THE RIDERS OF THE SIDHE**

By Kenneth C. Flint  
Bantam Books, 24175-3; 260 pp.  
Cover art by Don Maitz, \$2.95

REVIEWED BY PAUL MCQUIRE

A huge, black-robed, arch-evil being with a single glowing red eye leads an army in an attack which devastates a castle. Only the mysterious orphan escapes, to seek his destiny, which nearly everyone knows far more about than he does. A giant demi-god who rides his chariot over water befriends him. This being is Manannan. On his island are magical items which would later inspire much of the Camelot Holy Grail legends. There are also a group of ultimate warriors who are called the Riders of the Sidhe. Title notwithstanding, they have very little to do with this book.

Manannan, (by far the most interesting character in the book, although not in much of it), sends the boy off on a dangerous mission. He is befriended by a girl who has great power, but is given little to do, and a clown who is more than he seems. Never spending more than a few minutes in any one place or situation, as one thing just naturally follows another, and everything falls in place, the boy follows the traditional hero's route like he had a map.

There is nothing very wrong with this book. Mr. Flint is a more than competent wordsmith. The story is derived from Eric's famous ancient legend of Lugh of the Long Arm. Yet, there is nothing exceptional here, either. Each month, a dozen good, but undistinguished, formula fantasy novels are published. *RIDERS OF THE SIDHE* is one of them.

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# Reviews By Alma Jo Williams

**THE MAKING OF THE RETURN OF THE JEDI**, Ed. By John Phillip Peecher  
Del Rey non-fiction, Ballantine  
\$3.50, 292pp., Illustrated

It has become almost obligatory for the top-touted science fiction of adventure movies to have not only a novelized version on the market but the "How it was done" version also. Peecher does a good job of interviewing the top people in the project and as usual, for anyone interested in the technical aspects of film making, the book is a wealth of information. Big Disappointment! The 32 pages of "fabulous behind-the-scenes photos" are in black & white. Cheap! Cheap!

**MUTINY ON THE ENTERPRISE**  
By Robert Vardeman, Pocket SF  
189 pp., \$2.95

The Enterprise is ordered to forget its overdue maintenance overhaul and take several obnoxious diplomats to a trouble spot in the galaxy as fast as possible. Added to this is the pickup of an empathic woman who is casting a spell of pacifism over the crew causing them to mutiny at the crucial moment. Standard ST fare -- it has its moments.

**THE FACE OF CHAOS**  
Ed. Robert Asprin & Lynn Abby  
Ace Fantasy, 242 pp., \$2.95

Our old friends, Hakeim, the storyteller, Jubal, the slaver, Tempus, the almost immortal Hellhound, Enas Yorai, the cursed sorcerer, Illyra, the fortune teller, Lalo, the artist, are back to tell their tales of the invasion of Thieves World. Thud & blunder, sword & sorcery not comparable to the run-of-the-mill Conan etc. Add it to your collection.

**LANDO CALRISSIAN AND THE FLAME WIND OF OSEAN** By L. Neill Smith  
Del Rey SF, 181 pp., \$2.50

Lando and his inept pentagonal 'droid, Vuffi Raa are pursued to Osean by Roker Septa, the inept sorcerer from the Rafe System (Mind Harp book) seeking revenge from the last book. Lando's unpredictable gambler's luck and his 'droid's penchant for screw-ups make it a fun 45-minute reading experience.



**THE DON JUAN PAPERS -- Further Castaneda Controversies**  
By Richard de Mille  
Ross-Erikson Pub., Santa Barbara, CA  
526 pp., \$10.95

Carlos Castaneda's TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN -- published by the University of California as a work of science -- told how a naive anthropology student spent five years playing sorcerer's apprentice to a wily old Mexican Indian who possessed the wisdom of a Zen master, the agility of a deer and the powers of a real magician. In ten years, Castaneda produced five best-selling books about the amazing Don Juan, while scholars turned out scores of articles about the elusive Castaneda, yet all along many doubted whether Don Juan even existed.

In CASTANEDA'S JOURNEY, Richard de Mille asked: Are the Don Juan books a hoax? De Mille unmasked the bogus fieldworker but took Castaneda seriously as Trickster-Teacher, a deceptive truth bringer who taught a new conception of "reality to millions of readers." THE DON JUAN PAPERS asks: What are the costs and benefits of the Don Juan hoax? How did Castaneda get away with it? Why did he do it?

In forty-four chapters (39 of which have not been published before) some thirty scholars and laymen celebrate or bemoan Castaneda's influence on social science, philosophy, education, psychotherapy, religion, literature, library science and private lives. An "Alleglossary" displays two-hundred passages found in libraries, which furnish certain or likely origins for Don Juan's teachings and Carlos's adventures. A major biographical portrait offers startling new information about Castaneda, and illustrated by the first good likenesses of him as child, youth and man. THE DON JUAN PAPERS is for all readers -- and non-readers -- of Castaneda, who wish to understand the most intriguing episode in anthropology since the Piltdown forgery and its creator, one of the great intellectual hoaxes of all time.

**YESTERDAY'S SON**  
By A.C. Crispin  
Pocket SF, 191 pp., \$2.95

This episode involved the Time Guardian, a son which Spock sired on Zarabeth when he and McCoy were thrown into the past of the planet, Sarpeidon, by the Librarian, Mr. Atoz, and the Romulans. The premise of Spock's son, sired 5,000 years in the past, being brought into the future after his planet has been destroyed, and then returning to the past to bring his people out of the hunting phase of the Stone Age and begin them on the circular path to the civilization which will culminate in their future progeny being returned to their past by the Atavatron when the sun, Beta Niobe, goes nova, is interesting enough in itself. As a story line, it is different than the usual ST plots and worth reading for that purpose.

**TALES OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL**  
By Arthur Machen  
Pinnacle Books, 408 pp., \$6.95

In the early 70s, Pinnacle put out TALES OF HORROR, Volume 1, which included The Great God Pan, The White People and The Novel of the Black Seal. Volume 2 never appeared, at least not in the book stores I frequent. This volume comprises Volume 1, and I suspect, what would have been volume 2. The stories are all classics and included is the short story (3 pages) "The Bowmen," the short WWI story which gave Machen a real boost in popularity. In fact, so powerful was the vision of St. George and the medieval bowmen coming to rescue the beleaguered British Tommy at Sedan, that many soldiers at the battle swore they had seen the cloudy gray shapes striding across the battlefield. The price is high considering the cheap newsprint paper the book is printed on, but the printed words more than make up for this defect. By all means, get it.

**THE WINDS OF CHANGE & OTHER STORIES**  
By Isaac Asimov  
Ballantine, 277 pp., \$2.95

Another volume of Asimov has hit the bookshelves! All but two of these tales were written before 1976 and for the sake of variety, the stories are listed alphabetically each with an author's introduction in which the Good Doctor 'fesses up that not all of the stories were acceptable to the first editor whose desk they crossed. If you're an Asimov fan, this is for you, Babe!



**CAST A COLD EYE**  
By Alan Ryan  
Dark Harvest, April 1984, 239 pp.  
Hardcover Tr Ed \$18.00, Limited Ed  
\$35.00, Paperback to be released  
by TOR, July 1984.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL A. MORRISON

To the wild, savage western coast of Ireland comes Jack Quinlan, the bland but likeable protagonist of **CAST A COLD EYE**, to write an historical novel set during the famine of the late 1840s. Jack and his rented word processor settle down in the small village of Doolin, which like its aged inhabitants, positively reeks of tradition and history. Before long, Jack begins to hear ghostly cries "borne on the dark night breezes" (p. 39) and has several eerie encounters in the night. Are these ghostly manifestations real, or are they merely imagined, the side effects of Jack's research? And what dark secret lies behind the blood ritual Jack observes during a funeral in the rocky, overgrown Doolin cemetery?

I'm not about to spoil this subtle, original novel by telling you. In his earlier horror novels, **THE KILL** (TOR, 1982) and **DEAD WHITE** (TOR, 1983), Ryan demonstrated considerable skill in creating characters and a sense of place. In **CAST A COLD EYE**, he has applied these gifts to an old-fashioned ghost story. Using mainly short, subdued affecting scenes, Ryan brings to life Jack, his newly acquired Irish girl friend Grainne Clarkin, and a large supporting cast of Doolinites. The relationships between these people are credible, fully developed, refreshingly free of cliché.

Equally vivid is the desolate Irish countryside and its music, religion and history. Here, for example, is Ryan on the music of the villan pipes (p. 78):

"The tune was low and slow, wistful, wordless, singing of ancient hills and long-passed breezes and labors long completed and others left undone. The crying notes slipped out of the pipes and filled the corners of the pub, as a night-time chill might fill the corners of a house, and lamented the passing of all that was old or dead or dying."

That, I venture, is the prose of a writer who loves Irish music. Indeed, I found Alan Ryan's County Clare more fully realized than, say, the rural Ireland of Frank Herbert's **THE WHITE PLAQUE** (1982).

These virtues notwithstanding, this leisurely, understated novel

may move too slowly for some readers. But your patience will be rewarded; **CAST A COLD EYE** is "... a good (tale) ... as dark in its meaning as it is rich in the telling" (p. 106). And don't wait for the paperback; Dark Harvest's well-produced trade edition is worth \$18.00 -- although not for its amateurish illustrations, which add nothing to the story. Like all fine ghost stories, Ryan's evocative, often beautiful novel is one to savor now and to re-read in years to come.

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**MYSTERIES IN SPACE, THE BEST OF THE DC SCIENCE FICTION COMICS**  
Edited by Michael Uslan  
Fireside Bks, 1980, 251 pp., \$7.95  
REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

I read this one several years ago, but it came to my attention recently when I saw it on the sale table at a local bookstore for \$1.99. It is a very nice sampling of stories, 24 in all, from 1947 to 1963. Some of the stories involve continuing characters including Adam Strange, the Star Rovers, The Atomic Knights and others.

Some of the writers and artists may be familiar to science fiction readers. Among those included are writers Otto Binder, Gardner Fox and John Broome; artists Virgil Finlay, Carmine Infantino, Frank Frazetta and Murphy Anderson.

This is a nice book, the DC science fiction is among the best published in comics, and is well worth a read.

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**STAR RAIDERS**  
DC Graphic Novel #1  
By Elliot S. Maggin and Jose Luis Garcia Lopez  
1983, 68 pp., \$5.95  
REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS

This is the first in a series of graphic novels from DC Comics, beautifully painted (not drawn) by comics veteran J.L. Garcia Lopez. The high quality paper and reproduction make this a very attractive book.

The story is a basic space opera as two young Han Solo types, Tomorrow Hardtack (female) and Jedediah Poole (male), fight the evil Zylons, a dangerous enemy who can regenerate from only a small part of a body. Jed and Tommy are befriended by Ezekiel Vicker, a 600-year-old librarian who we are led to believe was quite a fighter pilot in his day. Zeke teaches Jed and Tommy much about repairing star cruisers, flying them and killing Zylons. They recruit a band of freedom fighters on another planet and proceed to destroy the Zylons.

There is an interesting ending, but its not enough to save a boring story. Pick this one up for the art and don't let yourself be too disappointed in the story.

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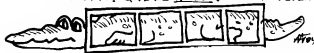
**TIME FOR SHERLOCK HOLMES**  
By David Dworkin  
Dodd, Mead & Co., 1983, 200 pp.  
\$19.95. Published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart, Ltd.

REVIEWED BY W. RITCHIE BENEDICT

Combining Sherlock Holmes with science fiction is comparably rare. There are a few examples, such as **THE SCIENCE FICTIONAL SHERLOCK HOLMES**, published back in the 1950s and now a collector's item. There have been one or two paperbacks as well as **SHERLOCK HOLMES: WAR OF THE WORLDS** by Manly Wade Wellman and Wade Wellman, and **THE EARTHQUAKE MACHINE**, but generally the two do not seem to mesh. (I have waited for years for someone to bring out a Star Trek novel wherein Mr. Spock meets Holmes -- but perhaps this is too much logic for anyone!) This is strange because Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has a niche in the science fiction and horror field that is all his own. The basic problem is finding a writer who knows both Holmes and S.F. well and has an affection for both. Nicholas Meyer would fill the bill, but he has been too busy destroying Kansas in **THE DAY AFTER**.

In this new novel, Holmes, Watson, Mrs. Hudson and Holmes' brother Mycroft are all alive and well living in the 1990s, kept that way by an Elixir of Youth de-

COMIC STRIPS PROVIDE INSUFFICIENT SCOPE FOR MY TALENTS! GIVE ME NOVELS! TRILOGIES, EVEN!



veloped by the great detective himself. Holmes and Watson have lived in seclusion in Sussex for more than 50 years when they are stirred to action by the murder of the Prime Minister inside a locked room. All the evidence points to the infamous Professor Moriarty, but how can he still be alive? Holmes reveals that H.G. Wells once visited him and said that the Time Machine was real -- invented by a friend who was subsequently murdered. This was the basis of his book.

The Time Machine was damaged in the attempt to steal it and the resulting effects have made Moriarty madder and more of a megalomaniac than ever before. He lures Dr. Watson to his hideout through the agency of a beautiful woman, one Lily Cantrell and tries to destroy Salt Lake City, Air Force One and the President with a nuclear bomb he has stolen from an arms stockpile. All this is just for starters -- in the first 88 pages.

The attempt literally backfires, but it is not long before the Professor comes up with a new scheme -- the systematic assassination of heads of state in both past and future history, eventually resulting in total chaos and in a situation perfect for his purposes of world control. Due to his narrow escape from the bomb, he is drawn to the scene of assassinations in the manner of a pendulum, swinging back and forth from past to future. Holmes and Watson have a matter of minutes on the future side of the swing to stop him, having calculated the approximate time from historical murders. As they have virtual physical immortality through the Elixir, each future setting they await Moriarty is more odd than the previous one -- eventually they await him on Mars. Watson has married Lily by this time, and on one of his periodic swings, Moriarty carries her back into the past with him, separating husband and wife by 300 years. He even corrupts his own past self, thereby creating a circular loop. Meanwhile Holmes has his hands full with a future dictatorship that has arisen on the Red Planet.

As a light entertainment, this book is a lot of fun. Parts of it, such as Holmes using a computer with a disc drive are quite clever and work well. Other parts seem a bit contrived and one-dimensional. The author has a feel for the language of the Holmes novels.

All in all, what we have here is a near miss -- close, but no cigar. For the Baker Street fan, though, it is a must. It is an oddity that will gain in value in

the coming years. For the average reader, it might be best to wait for the paperback.

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**SUPERMAN**  
**FROM THE THIRTIES TO THE EIGHTIES**  
Crown Publishers, Inc  
384 pp., \$15.95

Reviewed by Bill Winans

This is an updating of the earlier SUPERMAN FROM THE THIRTIES TO THE SEVENTIES and it is an improvement upon it. The new version contains more stories of the last 25 years, including the first Supergirl story, the first Brainiac story and a touching story about Jonathan Kent's return from the grave to visit and assist his super son. Several of the older stories are omitted, but many of the early Superman stories are reprinted here, including SUPERMAN #1.

Both volumes contain landmark stories, including the first appearances of Lex Luthor and Mr. Mxyzptlk, an origin story, and many stories from the early forties.

A long time fan of Superman, I like both books quite a lot. The 1983 book is more attractive, better paper and a nicer design. Most of both are in black and white and it's unfortunate there is so little color.

The style of the Superman stories have changed greatly over the years, with the early stories of a much less powerful Supes working largely outside the law a far cry from the man we are used to today. The book shows us Superman through the years as he has changed and is worthwhile for this and for nostalgia, but I don't recommend it for young readers, who will probably find the older stories strange and boring. And with the steep price tag, you may want to borrow it from the library as I did. (But then I do own the earlier edition.)

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**SKYWALKING**  
**The Life & Films of George Lucas**  
By Dale Pollock  
Harmony House, \$14.95  
304 pp., illustrated  
**REVIEWED BY BILL WINANS**

This biography of George Lucas emphasizes his growth and how his life has shaped the man and his

movies. It also carries much background information on the release of films in the 1970s, especially on other young filmmakers, including Francis Ford Coppola and Steven Spielberg.

The book begins with what the author considers a major turning point, an auto crash that the 18-year-old George was fortunate to survive. He relates the accident to George's love for the auto, fast driving and the car culture that became American Graffiti, George's first successful movie. The accident also led George to examine his life and to find a different path, one that led him to college, film school and "a galaxy far far away."

We find George to be a shy, private and generous man who is surprised and sometimes hurt by the fame and attention he receives. George is a stranger in a strange land, a 39-year-old master movie-maker with a personal fortune well over \$40 million who avoids the Hollywood establishment and many of the trappings of wealth. He has resigned from both the Writer's and Director's Guilds (but has since rejoined the Writer's Guild) and is building Skywalker Ranch near San Francisco, where he and friends can create films away from and independent of the Hollywood studios.

The author examines each of George Lucas' films, provides background information, George's role and anecdotes. Perspectives of different participants are considered. Also discussed are films Lucas has had a hand in, including the risqué BODY HEAT, where he was (unofficial) executive producer, but chose not to receive screen credit for several reasons.

The book is thoroughly researched and is indexed, footnoted, has source notes and a complete filmography of George Lucas' work. As a fan of science fiction films I found a few inaccuracies, but these are trivial and should not detract from one's enjoyment of a fine book. Highly recommended.

**AFTERWORD:**

Changes have occurred since and because of this book. George and Marcia Lucas have divorced, ending a marriage author Dale Pollock credited with giving George so much support. Also the author has said that George's friendship with Francis Ford Coppola, strained over the years has improved, as both men have gained a better understanding of the other through this book.

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# JOURNEY TO THE GENRE'S CORE

## A Reply To Damon Knight

By Gregory Benford

We've tried for decades to isolate what true, irreducible inner quality SF has that makes it a separable genre. Damon Knight's notion that philosophical speculation is the True Core raises interesting questions, but I feel does not answer most of them.

When I suggested that hard SF "somehow seems to be the core" I was actually reporting a widespread belief, largely uninspected, of the bulk of the reading (and viewing) public. You can't help noticing that the bestseller lists carry the names of hard SF stalwarts -- Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke -- and not the Sturgeons, Pohls and Bradburys of the same vintage. Question is, why?

Partly, I suspect it comes from the fact that the public likes fiction deeply grounded in the real world. It's long been known that nonfiction top bestsellers (leaving out diet books etc.) outsell fiction top bestsellers by a typical ratio of 2:1. Similarly, the didactic fiction of Mitchener et al. sells better than the best thrillers. Even in as fanciful an area as SF, these biases probably hold sway. Hard SF benefits from this basically American taste; as Charles Platt remarks in *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW* #51, "I open a non-fiction book, or a rigorously realistic novel, with the definite expectation of discovering new and interesting information," and to his surprise, most of his friends do, too.

But Damon's case against hard SF as the center of the field rests also on his odd notion that our Founding Fathers, Verne and Wells, weren't hard SF types. Verne conspicuously allied himself with his contemporary technology, stating in one famous retort to a critic, "I never invent!" When he needed to get characters to the moon, he used what seemed possible at the time -- huge cannon -- and tried to take account of celestial facts. He got lots of it wrong, but that only means he didn't do it well, not that he was opposed to the standard of fidelity to fact.

Similarly Wells' famous injunction -- assume one improbable thing and then deal rigorously with it -- announces a central tenant of

hard SF. There must be a fantastic element, but then the methods should be orderly and convincing. His *Cavorite* wasn't obviously impossible when he wrote of it; neither was the time machine or invaders from Mars.

In fact, Heinlein (clearly a hard SF type) descends obviously from Wells; his "The Door Into Summer" specifically refers to "When the Sleeper Wakes."

True enough, the aim of some hard SF is the large landscape -- but not all hard SF. To dismiss rigor as "novelty" is to miss that invention is central to SF. If our standard of abiding worth is to be that a book should stand up to (and reward) re-reading, then novelty clearly would fade. But hard SF can and does contain drama, emotion and philosophy tightly grouped around the central images of science. Novelty is not the only purpose of hard SF.

Which brings us to Damon's assertion that philosophical inquiry is the true center of the field. The problem with this is that, first, the statement's too vague. Most of "serious" literature has philosophical aims; so do most of the arts. So what? We would like the core of SF to distinguish it from, say, the fictions of Sartre.

We've seen claims through the history of literature that it is essentially allegorical (18th century) or reportorial (19th century) or metaphorical (20th century) or philosophical (as Damon claims for SF). Of course, it's not merely any of these aspects. All general aspects can be applied; the interesting question is what's distinctive about a given class of works?

Second, too much SF doesn't have significant philosophical inquiry. This is even true of hard SF. For example, Niven's short work and many of his novels are devoid of it. Indeed, when he collaborates with Pournelle we can clearly see an outside hand inserting it, lending a different flavor. Also, lots of SF adventure fiction isn't philosophical (Leigh Brackett, Chalker, McCaffrey). Leinster's "First Contact" isn't philosophical unless you force a metaphysical interpretation. Neither is "Arena," etc.

You could maintain, of course, that "high" SF is more philosophical -- but it's got other virtues too, which make it "high."

Fantasy is mostly pastoral, animistic, and politically conservative. SF is more often urban, technophilic and politically radical -- in the sense of striking at fundamental issues. Using a distinct disjunction from contemporary reality demands thinking about basic issues. Sometimes this has a libertarian flavor, as befits the independent-mindedness of writers everywhere. I wouldn't call right-wing political theory "simplistic," as Damon does, since pragmatism (which he cites) isn't necessarily an inferior philosophy.

Damon would cast aside scientific fidelity in favor of reaching a philosophical point, saying "It does not matter a rap if the science is wrong." But this hazards losing a goodly fraction of the audience. Worse, it also casts the philosophy into contrast with known facts.

How serious this is depends on the details of how it's done, the particular story, etc. How seriously will a reader take an author's ruminations or explorations on metaphysics when he's clearly shown that he doesn't feel bound by what we've already learned about the world? You run the risk of merely demonstrating to the reader that your "original philosophical point" applies only to a dream world.

I feel that we are in the business of enlisting the devices of realism in the cause of the fantastic. One of the masters of the exact, gritty detail in short stories is certainly Damon Knight. And he's at his best while doing this. His "I See You" uses an invention which isn't theoretically impossible (as I remember it). Similarly, "Masks" is perfectly plausible.

That's what gives these stories quite a bit of their power. The working through of consequences, ever mindful of what we know of the world, doesn't merely introduce "novelty" as Damon has it. Doing so plays tennis with the net up -- always a more interesting spectacle. I'm sure that's the way it will be played twenty years hence.



## INTERVIEW:

# JULIAN MAY

Julian May burst on the science fiction scene suddenly, with a single story that made her a writer to watch. The story was "Dune Roller" and it appeared in *ASTOUNDING* for December 1951. It has been anthologized numerous times since, most recently in *SCIENCE FICTION MASTERPIECES*, edited by Silverberg and Greenberg.

In 1981 she did it again, with

things. About 1957 my husband and I founded a production service for educational publishers. For example, a publisher would come to us and say he would like a series of books on a certain topic at a specific reading level. And we would produce the books from manuscript to finished volume. My husband would do the design and the production and deal with the binders and buy the paper and things like that.

and other publishing companies. From about 1957 to date I have written and published more than two hundred and fifty juvenile books, under my own name and eight pseudonyms. Most of them are called supplementary reading books, mostly used in the schools for children who don't like to read. Rather than give them a textbook, teachers give these kids a book called *MEET THE QUARTERBACKS* or

## CONDUCTED BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

*THE SAGA OF PLIOCENE EXILE*, starting with *THE MANY-COLORED LAND* and following with *THE GOLDEN TORC* (1982) and *THE NONBORN KING* (1983). There followed acclaim, award nominations and even some controversy when *ALGIS Budrys* cited the books as explicitly the sort a fan would write.

Julian has been active as a fan in the past. She chaired the 1952 Worldcon. But she has also been writing busily in other areas. *THE MANY-COLORED LAND* marks one of the most successful returns in the history of science fiction.

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**SFR:** You came on the scene very suddenly, as far as the science fiction world is concerned. What were you doing between your first story in 1951 and the present?

**MAY:** In 1951 I wrote "Dune Roller" for Campbell. I loved science fiction dearly, and I wrote one other story, which I had not originally intended for publication. It was called "Star of Wonder" and at *Chicon II* in 1952, Sam Mines, having read "Dune Roller," asked me if I had anything else. I said, "Yes, but you won't like it, Sam. It's not the kind of story I've seen, especially in your magazine." He bought it. But after that, I did drop out of the field. There are reference books which accredit me with Julian Chain's work, but Julian Chain is really a man named Jesse Charney. In the 1950s you couldn't make a living writing science fiction unless you wrote a great volume of work, mostly short pieces for magazines. I am not that sort of writer. I don't write short pieces. Even "Dune Roller" was kind of a condensed novel. So I went into other forms of writing. I wrote some 7000 encyclopedia articles on science, among other

I would write the books, research them, deal with the artists, etc. We did this for many years. To a certain extent we still do it. Today Starmont House ((the publishing company of Julian's husband, Ted Dikty)) is primarily a publisher of non-fiction about the science fiction field. This is chiefly my husband's operation. We have "his-and-hers" offices in our house. His office is downstairs and consists of all kinds of shipping rooms and an editorial room with xerox machines and such, and mine is more a typical author's den upstairs, but we work closely with each other. He acts as my agent but does not publish my books. I am published by Houghton Mifflin

*GENERAL CUSTER AT LITTLE BIG HORN* or a book on the life of the fox or whatever topic the child might be interested in. The kid reads it and it can be used as a tool in helping him to learn. This is the kind of material I have written for the past twenty-eight or twenty-nine years. But I did not forget science fiction. I considered science fiction my first love.

**SFR:** You were a fan for a while before you were a professional writer. Could you say something about your experience in fandom?

**MAY:** I began reading science fiction in 1947, and shortly thereafter I had a letter published in a letter column and it was off to the races. I began to correspond with a number of fans all over the world. As it happened, I specialized in people from Canada and England and Australia. I corresponded with fans in the United States also, but since we were an international group, we decided to form a club. It had the great name of Science Fiction International, and I edited and published a fanzine called *INTERIM NEWSLETTER* which sort of kept on for about two years, even though it was only supposed to be interim. I haven't seen a copy of it in ages. It was just a typical fanzine, but with an international angle. I remember receiving a letter from Dr. David H. Keller at one point, saying fairly tartly, did I realize that the name of our club, Science Fiction International, was fairly close to the *Communist Internationale*? (Laughs) Later, instead of the voluminous fan correspondence I turned to writing various things -- not science fiction though.

My first published piece of work was on Walt Kelly, the creator of Pogo. I had been a fan of



Kelly's when he did Pogo comic books, way back in the beginning of his career, so I was able to do a fairly comprehensive description of his work. My second published piece was "Dune Roller." Before the story was published, I went to my first science fiction affair, a Midwestcon. They were then held at Bellefontaine Ohio, at a creaky old hotel named Beatley's on the Lake. We called it "Beastly's on the Bayou." There I met such figures as the legendary Wilson Tucker, the legendary Bea Mahaffey, the legendary Frank Robinson and the legendary Darrell C. Richardson. All the good old First Fans were there; and because I had sold a story, that made me one of the gang. I was welcomed. There was also a young science fiction publisher there, named Ted Dikty, who did anthologies. When he discovered I had written a story for Campbell, he said, "I'd like to read it, so that I might consider it for my anthology." Little did I know that his publisher's advances had more in mind than mere money. It was one of those fan romances. We have been married for thirty years ... I went to New Orleans for the World Convention in 1951, and at that point something snapped. I agreed to be chairman of the Chicago convention, Chicon II, in 1952. I think they thought they were getting a front woman, a sweet amiable little lady who would do all the work and stand there and smile while all sorts of things went on behind the scenes. But instead they got a real live chairman, who at one point fired a few members of the central committee... I was very proud of Chicon II. It was the first "big time" convention. It had the largest attendance up to then, an unofficial total of 1400 people. For the first time mainstream publishers who were publishing science fiction came up and set up exhibits just as they did for conventions of librarians and booksellers. We had Campbell; we had a Nobel laureate geneticist. H.J. Muller; we had Hugo Gernsback; we had Doc Smith as Moon Commissioner. Every convention member got a deed to one crater on the Moon signed by Doc Smith. They could look at their crater on an enormous eight-foot map my father had put together. At the end of the convention someone stole the map. I think it was mounted on four-foot panels. How they did it, I have never been able to figure out ... That was my fan career. I went to two more conventions as the wife of Ted Dikty and then dropped out.

SFR: Do you write for any fanzines other than the international one?

MAY: No.

THESE SIX-FUNCTION  
COMPUTER TIE TACKS  
ARE MORE TROUBLE  
THAN THEY'RE WORTH.



SFR: Did you keep up with science fiction during the period in which you were not writing it?

MAY: Up through the late 50s, I read a great deal of science fiction and kept in touch with certain friends we had made in the field. Then we became less interested as science fiction seemed to become more experimental and less traditional. I don't read science fiction for intellectual stimulation. To me, SF should not be didactic, but rather a literature of entertainment. On the other hand, I am entertained on many different levels. I have nothing against "New Wave" writing in principle if it is entertaining -- if it has a puzzle element for example, or if it is very innovative in its use of language. But there were certain kinds of stories that I felt were just winging it. They were just amorphous experiments that didn't appeal to me. At that time, the great English thriller writers were flourishing, and I very much preferred their style. So for many years my way of amusing myself with light reading was with the English adventure and mystery novels. If my techniques derive from any popular fiction, probably it's from British thrillers rather than from any science fiction, except possibly the works of Doc Smith. I would consider Smith to be my literary grandfather. He was a dear man and his stories had the kind of immense vision, the sense of scope and fun and adventure that I revel in. Today, Doc Smith's stories can be particularly enjoyed by younger readers. When I began my own SF novels, I thought I'd like to do something in the spirit of Doc Smith -- but in the modern idiom, using techniques I had learned after thirty years of professional writing.

SFR: Why did you suddenly turn to writing a science fiction novel?

MAY: It was not sudden. I have been quoted in print as far back as 1974 saying that science fiction was my first love and I would some day like to return to it. There were practical considerations in earlier days, the difficulty of earning a living in science fiction. So I waited until I had reached a point where there were enough royalties coming in, and I did not have to worry about lowering the standard of living to which I had become accustomed. I was inspired to begin this series of science fiction novels by a costume I wore at a Westerncon in 1976. I am a great costume freak. I have a 1928 Singer sewing machine that I bought for \$14.00 in 1953 and I've had it ever since. All it does is sew in a straight line: a generic sewing machine. The diamond space suit I wore to Westerncon was my original inspiration.

At first I had no notion of writing a novel; but then as I was writing my other stuff, the damn costume would come creeping back into my subconscious mind and I would wonder what kind of character would wear something like that. I began to put little bits and pieces into a folder marked "The Novel." Off and on I'd add little bits of research that I'd think might be useful. Before long the folder was about four inches thick. By 1978, I had had enough of this, so I outlined the three novels that I called the Galactic Milieu Trilogy. These are set about a hundred years in the future. They are not the Pliocene novels but they were outlined first. After I'd worked out the future world and discovered that it was going to deal with metapsychic abilities -- I use the European term for high mental faculties rather than the American "psi" -- I came to two conclusions. First, writing novels on this topic would be very difficult, since I'd have to create plausible characters who used telepathy and other superior mind powers as a matter of everyday occurrence. Second, not only would these novels be hard to write, but they might not find as large an audience as some other kinds of science fiction. Remember, I wanted to be an entertaining writer. I wanted to give the reader books that would be fun. For that reason I decided that I would first do a more simple type of SF book, a time-travel story using characters from the elaborate future galactic civilization that was already worked out. I would send these people back to a suitable era in the past, and using certain elements of myth and folklore that

I was fond of, I would concoct a saga.

Before I began to write *The Pliocene Saga*, I had it outlined almost in its entirety -- not in fine detail, but so that I knew all the plot elements. That's the way I customarily work. If you're writing lots of books as I did for so many years, you've got to be disciplined and keep things organized or you'll go bananas, you won't meet your deadlines, and then people won't work with you any more. So the four books of the *Pliocene Saga* were outlined, and I knew what would happen. I wrote both *THE MANY-COLORED LAND* and *THE GOLD-EN TORC* originally as a single, huge 270,000-word novel that could be split in two at the publisher's option. This took me sixteen months, which is pretty swift. I do a lot of rewriting and working over of material. But I usually write two or three chapters, then polish them, and then go on, so that by the time I'm finished I don't have to begin rewriting at the beginning again, which is very discouraging. I give the final draft a read-through for typos and obvious errors and inconsistencies, then send it out.

**SFR:** Do you ever stray from the outline?

**MAY:** Certainly, in a minor sense. There are always new ideas that occur to me. I definitely change things. But I never change major plot elements. My way of writing can perhaps be compared to a dramatist's rather than to the typical novelist's. Some writers sit down and just let it all pour out of their subconscious. Some don't even know how their story is going to end. But a dramatist has to think of his audience, and think of the characters as vehicles of plot. He has to think along these lines: "First I'll have a scene of violence and action, and then I will have a scene with more tranquility or introspection so that I can get things ready for the next zap!" I do this all the time. I use vulgarity; I use humor; I use erudition -- all coming after one another and contrasting with one another. I have wild, almost purple passages of description and scenes of violent action or oddball sex. I try to pace my novels in addition to plotting them. These are technical elements that

are common in plays and in screen-plays especially, than in SF novels.

**SFR:** It sound to me as if, all your other writing habits to the contrary, you are producing exactly the book you want, rather than the book that will make the largest amount of money, or the one that is exactly what the publisher wants. Are you in a sense writing what you want first and looking around for a market afterwards?

**MAY:** All the years I was writing children's books, I was writing what other people asked of me, as varying as a book about movie monsters or a series about American artists, which would be terribly esoteric and hard to get across to little kids. I have always had to write material that others asked me to produce. So of course my science fiction is what I want to do. I write to amuse myself. I love to read over my own stuff -- unlike some authors who won't do it, or maybe read it and cringe. I like my books. My stuff entertains me. I don't cringe when I reread it -- except occasionally. I wish more writers wrote like me! ... I love action-filled science fiction. I am a fan. I have been accused of being a fan and I admit to it.

**SFR:** You are no doubt familiar with the *Algis Budrys* review in which he said *THE MANY-COLORED LAND* is exactly the sort of thing a fan would write. He seemed to be ignoring the fact that you had written two hundred other books.

**MAY:** Perhaps he didn't know my career as a juvenile writer. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't. Almost no one in science fiction was aware of what I had been doing before the *Pliocene* books appeared. When I would appear at SF conventions, I'd simply smile and say, "Yeah, I'm a writer. Sort of a mainstream writer." I would say this in an apologetic fashion to the average fan and he would say, "Oh! -- and go find someone else to bug." What is a "fannish" writer is a question I think you'll find hard to answer. Does this mean that I write books that appeal to fans? Does this mean that a "fannish" writer is different from a "proish" writer? I'm a professional, and I'm keenly aware of trends in popular literature. I write not for the science fiction in-group, but for a wide audience -- even for people who think they dislike science fiction but still like thrillers.

**SFR:** Do you think any of *Budrys'* comments are valid, about how your being a fan affected the kind of book you wrote?

**MAY:** It was a very long and rambling review and it dealt with many different topics and I think that unless you were specific and asked about this or that paragraph I don't think I could comment on it very intelligently. It's been a while since I read it. Everyone remembers that he said, "Julian May is a fan. This is the kind of book a fan would write." I don't think I really understand what he meant. I remember *Algis Budrys* from way back in the 50s. I think he remembered me as a young fan. At an early Philadelphia convention for example, I got up on the stage and sang comic fannish songs and accompanied myself on the piano. I know he was there and heard me. I think that images like that stay in your mind, just as a parent will remember a child when it is small and see the child in the adult. Perhaps this fan image was so unforgettable that dear A.J. could not get me out of his mind. ((Laughs))

**SFR:** One of the things he said was that, had you not been a fan, you would have put all these people in the *Pliocene* and left them there in a Robinson Crusoe-type adventure without introducing further elements; but a fan would like to have more science-fictional elements piled in. Therefore, because you were a fan, this is what you did.

**MAY:** Unless *Algis Budrys* is a mindreader, he doesn't know why I write what I write. I know that I outline the material with great care, and this is the way that I have always written. There are considerable science elements in my books which are, for the most part, pretty valid. The fuzzy bits are hard to find. My dynamic-field theory only seems far out -- the propulsion mechanism for the flying machines, the superluminal starship field, the sigma field which is basically your generic force field -- all these are part of the new physics that is coming along now. My earth science is authentic. So is my genetics. What does *Budrys* mean, I would have written a Robinson Crusoe story? Perhaps he would have written a Robinson Crusoe story. But I can't relate to "this author should have written a story thus-and-so." I don't think that is fair criticism. A critic should judge a book objectively after reading it. If he would have written it differently, then he should do so.



SFR: Of course, this is why "A Christmas Carol" is not the "last time-travel story." You can give the same idea to fifty different writers and get fifty stories, all totally unlike one another.

MAY: If he is also a writer, a critic must be very careful not to project his own writing preferences into his critical review.

SFR: Have you ever done any reviewing yourself?

MAY: No, I am not a critic, although I have done considerable research into literary criticism especially studies of myth, 19th century romanticism, and the psychology of literature.

SFR: How do you get along with critics? How has the critical reception been, and does it influence you in any way?

MAY: There have been all kinds of reviews of my stuff, and I would say that by and large they have been favorable. I think a lot of people have recognized what I am trying to do. I have been called a good old-fashioned adventure writer, which makes me proud. I also find that academics appreciate the material I'm writing. I am very fond of academics, and have tried to include many levels of meaning in my work, doing this deliberately so there will be goodies for them to ferret out. I use mythic elements. I use folkloric elements. I use a lot of Jungian psychology that I have squirreled away in there. There's cultural anthropology and politics galore because I was originally a Chicagoan and Chicago is the home of dirty politics. I even have some theology hidden under the gore. But I have tried not to let these deeper elements interfere with the blood-and-guts and fun-and-games and crazy sex and vivid descriptions, and the general spirit of entertainment. I don't think that any critic would influence me to write differently. If you don't like my style of writing, then by all means read someone else. If you don't like colorful, descriptive writing, or as we sometimes call it, "purple prose," then read someone with a more lean and Spartan style. If you don't like humor in science fiction, if you think science fiction is a topic of huge seriousness, then read someone else. I have serious sides to my writing, but they are hardly perceptible to the naked eye.

SFR: It strikes me as a little odd that, particularly since you write what you do, that you are favorably inclined toward academics. Many writers, particularly the adventure writers, are hostile to them. Why is your perception of academics different?

MAY: Why are the other writers hostile? That's the question. I know that there are people in science fiction who feel threatened by the academics. They feel that the academics are invading "their" science fiction field and trying to either change it or take it over. This is not to be believed. The academics can only do us good, as they make SF more accessible to people. When I was young, science fiction was barely respectable enough to be on the shelves of the public library. Librarians were seriously wondering: Dare we put these science fiction juveniles by Robert Heinlein out, or will the community rise up. To see science fiction discussed seriously in universities, to see scholarly papers written not only on science fiction writing, but on fandom as a sociological phenomenon is marvelous.

If I've got a sense of wonder about anything these days, it's that the academics should be so taken with science fiction, and that it should have achieved such respectability. I don't know whether you attended the academic track at Chicon IV, but on the blackboard, placed there by a terribly serious academic, was the immortal quote "Keep science fiction in the gutter where it belongs." The academics are not stuffy. They're marvelous people. There was laughter and fun and ribaldry galore in the academic track. This ((1982)) is the first year that there has been an academic track at a worldcon, and I am very proud to say that I helped sponsor it. I consider myself a kind of academic godmother. Their participation is no threat to science fiction. It can only do us good; and it can do conventions good too, by maintaining their status as non-profit organizations. Many academics are also genuine fans. They have read science fiction since they were young. Tom Clareson is a member of First Fandom, for heaven's sake. He published *EXTRAPOLATION*, one of the original academic journals in the fields of science fiction and fantasy and allied reading.

There are many other journals of this type, published both here and abroad that deal with science fiction on an academic level. These don't appeal to all science fiction fans, but there's nothing in them to be afraid of. Anti-academic fans might try reading these

journals once in a while. They might find in them some interesting and challenging ideas.

SFR: I think the fear a lot of people have is that, like many other types of literature, science fiction will be something kids are forced to read in school, and will therefore learn to hate.

MAY: ((Laughs))

SFR: I remember how I was forced to memorize poetry in grade school. Like everyone else, I grew up hating poetry, and didn't go back to it for a decade.

MAY: If any teacher forced me to memorize parts of science fiction novels, I'm afraid I would hate it too. But that's not the way it works. Usually the science fiction course is an elective in the first place and the students wouldn't be there unless they liked it. Also it's mostly taught at the high school or college level. By that time you are taking the courses you want to take. There's no question of being forced to do anything.

SFR: On quite another subject, what do you plan to do after completing the Pliocene books?

MAY: There are only four Pliocene books. Three are now in print and the fourth and final book is ready. Just as the first and second are closely integrated, so are the third and fourth. One critic, after having read and enjoyed *THE GOLD-EN TORC*, the second and climatic volume of the first two books, said, "I don't see how May can top this." Well, stick with me, guys. You ain't seen nothing yet. May knows all kinds of tricks and May hasn't hardly used them all up. I think you will find that volumes 3 and 4 are the mixture as before, and of the same quality as volumes 1 and 2. After these, I will write the three *Milieu* books. The way the Pliocene books are written, they carry you in a cyclical movement back to the future world I had originally thought of writing about. One could go from the Pliocene books directly into the *Milieu*; or if you had never read the Pliocene books you could read the *Milieu* books and see them as a separate element entirely.

SFR: Thank you, Julian May.



# ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

## BOOK REVIEWS BY GENE DEWEESE

### HERETICS OF DUNE

By Frank Herbert  
Putnam, \$16.95

Roughly twenty years ago, I read the serialized version of *DUNE*. I wasn't always able to figure out who was doing what to whom, and I rarely had more than a hint as to why they were doing it. Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing, just the way I had earlier enjoyed A.E. van Vogt's equally convoluted but exciting *WORLD OF NULL-A*.

And now, with *HERETICS OF DUNE* it's the same thing all over again, only more so, although some of my confusion this time may be due to the fact that I was never able to read more than bits and pieces of the intervening three volumes, *DUNE MESSIAH*, *CHILDREN OF DUNE* and *GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE*. Any plot summary would be pointless except to say that the Bene Gesserit (the secret manipulators behind most of the action in the earlier books) are back at center stage with a new and improved Duncan Idaho ghola from the Bene Tleilax, and they have new and deadly competition from the Honored Matres, a similarly superhuman secret sisterhood only now returning from the far reaches of the universe.

Actually, virtually everyone in *HERETICS OF DUNE* is superhuman, both physically and mentally and that, I suspect is one reason it's so appealing and gripping. As with Sherlock Holmes in his battles with the criminal genius Moriarty, there are no foolish blunders of the kind ordinary mortals make, only continued confrontations between brilliant and seemingly invincible opponents. No one simply attacks someone else. Instead, they bring into play mental and physical disciplines that would make the greatest masters of our own martial and mental arts seem rank amateurs by comparison. No one simply asks a question or makes a guess. Instead, they analyze their opponents and their opponents' ancestors and everything about them and then construct precisely the right question or comment for the circumstances, and

then they analyze the response before constructing another question or statement. And they do it all in a matter of seconds. As for the storyline, there are wheels within wheels within wheels, and every move is the result of countless intrigues and counterintrigues and calculations.

And of course, there is the far future universe that Herbert has created. As always, it is presented in fascinating detail and yet cloaked in mystery and mysticism so that, while everything is realistic and believable, nothing is ever "ordinary."

In short, for sheer larger-than-life adventure, both mental and physical, *HERETICS OF DUNE* is about as good as you're going to find.

### THE SF BOOK OF LISTS

By Maxim Jakubowski and Malcolm Edwards, Berkley, Paperback, \$7.95

If you are browsing through lists, this is obviously the book for you. Or if you just want to find SF stories about world-destroying catastrophes, miniature human beings, godlike computers, life after death, private eyes, or any of dozens of other subjects, you'll find them here, along with lists of writers who published more than a million words before they were thirty, SF writers who are also scientists, SF writers who are jazz musicians, SF writers who are not Caucasians, etc., etc. There's even a list of SF novels that involve SF fandom, including two of my own early collaborations with Robert Coulson. And the late Arthur Tofte of Milwaukee heads the list of authors with "long-interrupted careers" with his hiatus from 1940 to 1972. All in all, a fascinating book, but don't take it all as gospel. Tofte's name, for instance, is misspelled as "Tofts" not once but twice.

### THE IDENTITY PLUNDERERS

By Isidore Haiblum  
Signet, Paperback, \$2.50

On a distant prison planet, a man whose memory has apparently been faultily erased is trying to escape and trying to remember who he is and why he was imprisoned in the first place. On present-day earth, a New York reporter is looking into the deaths and disappearances of several people he went to high school with decades earlier. Both stories are fast and furious with an often staccato style. One is reminiscent of an old-fashioned space opera while the other is very much a hard-boiled private eye yarn and there are times when you wonder if the two stories will ever converge. They finally do come together, however, in a flashy climax that has almost too many twists and turns to keep track of. In short *THE IDENTITY PLUNDERERS* is just plain fun to read, an unlikely but likable mixture of Mike Hammer and Captain Future.



"...SLOWLY AN ICY CLAM  
DESCENDED UPON HIM!"

#### HEECHEE RENDEZVOUS

By Frederik Pohl  
Ballantine/DelRey, \$14.95

As most SF readers will realize from the title, this is the third book in the series that began with *GATEWAY* and continued with *BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON*. Here we finally meet the Heechee themselves, the race that once dominated the entire galaxy but are known now only by the mysterious scientific marvels they left behind when they literally retreated into a black hole half a million years ago. We also find out why they retreated and who they were running from. Unfortunately, the key revelation -- that the creatures the Heechee were running from are in the process of reversing the expansion of the universe so that it will contract once again into a primordial atom and produce a new Big Bang and a new universe with different physical laws -- was made at the end of *BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON*. As a result, except for the nature of these creatures and a closer look at the Heechee, there's not much new this time. What's worse, the narrator is once again the flip, fast-talking and irrationally guilt-ridden Robinette Broadhead, one of the most irritating hero-narrators of recent times. To quote his computer, who doubles as his psychoanalyst and throws in its own explanatory comments every few pages, "My friend Robin has several faults, and one of them is a kind of cuteness that is not as amusing as he thinks it is." To be fair, however, Broadhead's narration in the original *GATEWAY* irritated me just as much, and that book ended up winning both the Nebula and the Hugo.

#### PROCURATOR

By Kirk Mitchell  
Ace, Paperback, \$2.75

In this gripping alternate world adventure, the Roman Empire still rules most of the known world all because Pilate refused to listen to the mob, thereby depriving Christianity of its founding martyr and nipping in the bud the religion that would eventually be the Empire's downfall. *PROCURATOR* is the story of Germanicus Julius Agricola, the current military governor of Anatolia, as he struggles against not only the barbarians that still threaten the Empire's border but against treachery within the Empire's own legions. The world itself is fascinatingly different and vividly presented and the characters are fully fleshed and emotionally in-

volving. And most importantly, the writing is not only first rate but fits the world and the characters almost perfectly. This one is not only for alternate world fans like myself but for anyone who just enjoys a good story.

#### GREEN EYES

By Lucius Shepard  
Ace, Paperback, \$2.95

A secret government project in the deep south is using graveyard bacteria to bring the recently dead back to life. The subjects, however, don't remember their previous lives but instead seem to manufacture whole sets of memories. Not only that, they occasionally, "remember" brilliant scientific discoveries which turn out to be quite real and useful. They also sometimes develop spectacular psychic powers, and one, after escaping from the project, even becomes a successful faith healer. Unfortunately, their new "lives" last, at most, only a few months before the bacteria, a luminescent green, multiply uncontrollably and destroy their resurrected hosts. Shepard's detailed and evocative descriptions bring the southern locales and the characters themselves vividly to life, and for at least half its length, *GREEN EYES* promised to be not only one of the most intriguing books of the year but one of the best. The resolution, however, while certainly spectacular, what with its mixture of voodoo and alternate realities and psychic duels, was too confusing and left too many loose ends for my taste. Even so, the fascinating premise of the story and the superior writing make it a book you shouldn't miss.

#### AMBASSADOR OF PROGRESS

By Walter Jon Williams  
Tor, Paperback, \$2.95

The young woman Fiona is set down on the feudal-level planet where she will spend the rest of her long life guiding the planet's civilization through the pitfalls of the rebirth of technology and into a new space age. Both Fiona and the natives she becomes involved with, even falls in love with, are well done and involving, and there are a number of excellent scenes, ranging from her own seemingly superhuman exploits to some tearful deaths. The main problem is the length. At over four hundred pages, *AMBASSADOR OF PROGRESS* is pretty good, particularly if you skim a few chapters, but at two or three hundred pages, it could've been really excellent.

#### CLAY'S ARK

By Octavia E. Butler  
St. Martin's, \$12.95

Eli Doyle is the survivor of the crash of earth's first returning starship, but he is infected by the alien virus that killed most of the rest of the crew. The virus endows those who survive its onslaught with superhuman strength and regenerative powers as well as rudimentary telepathy, but it also gives them an almost irresistible compulsion to spread the virus, no matter what the consequences. Eli, unable to resist this compulsion totally, starts an isolated, desert commune in hopes that, by kidnapping and infecting small numbers of outsiders one at a time, the inevitable spread of the virus can be at least delayed or, at best introduced to the world slowly without the chaos that would result from its uncontrolled spreading.

Octavia Butler is one of the best writers around, and *CLAY'S ARK* is as gripping and as hard to put down as any book this year, but it is also one of the most irritating, primarily because of the initial plot setup. The returning crew, instead of telling earth scientists of the problem and allowing themselves to be taken into quarantine, elect to tell no one and in a vain attempt at suicide, try to destroy the ship and themselves. That is, instead of having the book's basic conflict forced onto him, Doyle through his and the crew's own seeming stupidity, literally brings it on himself, thereby losing all the sympathy he might otherwise have gotten, at least from this reader.

#### THE FANTASTIC ART OF ROWENA

By Rowena Morrill  
Pocket, Paperback, \$8.95

Anyone who's so much as glanced at a rack of science fiction or fantasy books in the last few years has probably had his or her eye caught by a cover painting by Rowena Morrill. They're the ones that stand out because of the beauty and the almost photographic realism of not only their human figures but the alien creatures as well, monstrous and otherwise. Like Frank Frazetta, she often goes in for muscular men and shapely women, but unlike Frazetta, she doesn't dwell excessively on over-endowed, Conan-like barbarians and their conquests. Not only that, but in this non-artist's opinion, Rowena's are better done and a lot more distinctive and eye-catching than anything Frazetta ever did. The two dozen in this collection certainly are.

# CLARION CALL

Some years ago a writer wrote to me that, "Everyone has gone to Clarion." He might as well have said that, "Everyone has gone to Arcturus" -- except that I had at least heard of Arcturus. My comprehension or perhaps my incomprehension, was made further turbid because I had also heard one of the innumerable nippleheads who used to infest the old "Long John" Nebel NYC midnight-to-dawn radio talkshow claim that he had been to "the planet Clarion." His testimony would not have persuaded me that he had been to Scarsdale. When at last I realized (a very slow process) that "Clarion" was a name of a place in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in which was situated a junior college at which a sort of science fiction writing workshop was conducted, I felt, I admit, slightly miffed. "So," I said, "Everyone" was invited; but me, I was not invited. So." Long later, reading a description by someone who was, I concluded that I probably would not have enjoyed it. My grapes are more sour than yours.

But eventually, they did invite me. That is, the They invited me to Clarion West to be holden at the University of Washington in Seattle. I was mildly pleased. (It has been, it had been, a long time since I ever was more than mildly pleased about anything connected with this horrible profession at which a malign constellation has placed me. How did a nice boy like me get into it? Well, there was ... on second thought I won't tell the story.) I accepted and the They then turned me over to the beau, er, bureaucrats, bur-eaUcrats? hell with it. Who sent me the inevitable godawful Forms to fill out in which I was referred to, not as The Distinguished Author, nor even The Party of the Second Part; no: I was referred to as "Vendor." From further comment I refrain. I filled it out. I sent it in. And eventually, was slightly mollified by the receipt of a Train Ticket with Meals Included, also Pullman (or for the

benefit of the young, Sleeping) accommodations. I arranged my affairs very carefully, so carefully in fact that I got to the train station with only one quarter-dollar.

Q. What has it got in its pockets?

A. Not another AMTRAK ticket, you may be bloody sure.

To find that, according to the station agent, an error had been made. There were no Pullman etc. accommodations available. I could travel coach. Or I could wait several days. Did I have a choice? I took the coach ticket. It was made out by a middle-aged man who had on his face the expression of a boy who, in my own distant boyhood, by virtue of having sold more copies of the Saturday Evening Post than any other boy in town, had won a Flexible Flyer sled ... the year there was no snow.

"And what about the difference in price," I asked, "between the coach price and the Pullman (meals included) price?"

He scanned the ticket he had made out, compared it with the one the They had sent me, and his expression getting sadder and sadder, said, "Oh, you'll have to see Mr. Palmer about that."

Mr. Palmer, by contrast, had the look of a successfully incompetent chiropractor; "Hm," he said. He said, "Yes, Yes." And then, just when I expected him to say, "We'll fix that," or words (and moneys) to that effect, instead, he uttered the cryptic words, "Santa Fe."

I searched my mind for clues to this. If his name had been say, Diaz, Gomez, Valdez or the like (fat chance! -- *oportunidad gorda* in the limp language of Lope de Vega or Cervantes), I might have taken this literally. Holy Faith. Mr. Palmer was counseling me to -- but I dismissed this almost at once. No, so what then? A reference to D.H. Lawrence; no,

in that case he would have said, "Taos." A reference to General Lew Wallace, who wrote part of BEN HUR in the Governor's Palace of that once end-of-the-civilized-world outpost, when he was Governor of New Mexico? The last time I had been in Santa Fe it had been full of Navaho Indians with braided hair and tall untended Stetson hats, all drinking strawberry pop with a meditative air. None of them had said a word about Lew Wallace ... conceivably because I may have been, after all in Albuquerque instead. Ah well. None of the Navaho had mentioned D.H. Lawrence or Lew Wallace or, for that matter, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Ramon Navarro, Marlon Brando ... or anything else. Not even Oliver La Farge.

"Well, Mr. Palmer, I said -- crisply -- "there is as you see a fiscal difference between the cost, already paid, of the accommodations you here at the happy AMTRAK family guaranteed, and the accommodations you now instead offer me. So --"

"Santa Fe," he said. "You are entitled to uh refund. Ya gotta write ta Santa Fe for it." (Actually he pronounced it *Sanna Fay*. As in Sanna Claus. I refrain from comment, innuendo or sexuo-machosism.)

At this point I lost my habitual sang froid. "For Christ's sake, why?"

He didn't lose his. "Buhcause that's where the accountants are." He said.

"For Christ's sake, why?"

"In order that we may serve you better."

-- remember Will Rogers' comment on a similar claim by Standard Oil? "When I was a boy, I used to take the cow to be served by the bull." I remembered. And a lot of good it did me. A fat lot of good (*terrena de buena gorda*).

A moment passed. Mr. Palmer was in no hurry and why should he have been? Ever heard of the Railroad Retirement Act? Ha. "Oh,

WHERE'S THE CAPTION?



very well," I said. "Never mind the refund. How about just giving me a meal ticket. So I can eat?"

"A food voucher?" he corrected me. He considered. "Yes. Yeesss. For this trip that ud be...seven dollars. Why sure. You can get a food voucher." I did not precisely salivate. I did merely wait. And he said: "Ya gotta write ta Santa Fe for it."

Next thing I knew, I was out in the lobby. My glazed eyes surveyed the throng. The fools. Well. Maybe God wanted me to fast for 27 hours. It would make my wits clearer. For Clarion, of course; why else? Gradually a face took shape. I approached it. It looked up. Quizzically. "Say," I asked, "Aren't you Paul Williams, supersmart smart-ass science fiction kid fan whom I met at the Chi-Con II, ten years ago when you were only fourteen and who now writes, edits, publishes and --"

"Sure I am," he said. "And you're Avram Davidson. And this is my lovely wife Sachiko. --She's pregnant," he added. Unnecessarily.

I seized him by the thorax. "Listen, Paul," I asked. "Have you got seven dollars?"

# # # # #

Fortunately he had.

Goddamn train was nine hours late.

Does AMTRAK wonder why people would rather travel by goat-cart?

Nah.

Ever hear of the Railroad Retirement Act?

I was met at the dee-poe by Al-an Nourse, Vonda McIntyre, F.M. and Elinor Busby, and I forget who else; all of whom had re-assembled for the third time. Such was their relief that all of them kissed me. I was relieved of my baggage by helpful hands and conveyed, in what was either a Rolls-Royce or a Daimler, to accommodations luxurious beyond compare. Beyond compare with the AMTRAK coach section. And guess what was pressed into my seamed, sere hand? A meal ticket! And a voice said, "Hope you can stand standard WASP food for a week. Clarion can't offer anything exotic."

Stand it? Exotic? Bless you; to me, WASP food is exotic.

That was my first introduction to Clarion.

With it I spent a stimulating week, dimmed only by my own tomfoolery: forgetting that I was (at the time) a mere 20 to 30 years

older than the average student, all of whom preferred the easy comfort of the floor to that of the gothic arm chairs, I joined them there a sprawl; all went well until I tried to get up. The university doctor said, "Take this medication and don't try sudden movements and, in fact, don't return by either bus or train, because I'd hate to think of your having to be removed on a stretcher in some place like Cheshalis or Salem. Fly back."

"Those are your orders, Doctor?"

"Those are my orders," she said. I would have kissed her feet except that I was afraid of what it might do to my back. -- Otherwise, the days passed in a flurry, as intellectual as it were whirlwind, Vonda McIntyre handing out freshly-repro'd M&S at, it seemed three-hour intervals. A nest of singing birds. Well...anyway...some of um. Lots. Thanks to my brilliant endeavors, aided I suppose in some small measure by their own talents, many of the Clarion/West students at that session have since had professional publication and/or moon pitcher/tv production: Russell Bates, F.M. Busby, Gustav Hasford, Arthur Byron Cover, John Shirley, Scott Edelstein, David Wise, Bubbles Broxton, Vonda M. McIntyre, Bruce Jensen and numerous amounts of others whom I am too jealous to mention by name. --What? "Some of them had already had professional success before I --" I don't want to hear about it.

# # # # #

Years passed.

Years.

From time to time someone would say, "I hear that they liked you at Clarion." Automatically I would reply, "Liked" me? They loved me at Clarion!" But in my secret and innermost heart I heard a wee weeny voice asking, So how come they never asked you back?

Vonda had indeed written me a very nice letter of appreciation in which she said, among other nice things, "Lots of people can see what's wrong with a story but you were able to see what's right with one."

Ahem.

But they never asked me back.

Oh well.

There were other appointments. The University of California at Irvine. The College of William and Mary in Virginia. The University of Texas at El Paso. (There were

also lots of other non-appointments; the University of Delaware, for ex -- What? "The University of Delaware." I believe it is located behind one of the DuPont buildings -- the University of Delaware non-appointed me twice, in response to my single application. The University of Miskatonic at Arkham, I think it was, wrote that although they found "very amusing" my having replied "98.6" (in response to their asking me what degree I had), nevertheless... )

It was while I was at UTEP that the EngDeptExecSec (thank you, Phyllis (Mrs.) Jürgen Straus, you were always kind and helpful; and thank you, Alicia Burton, too: you too) said that there had been a Call for me "from a Professor Wright at another university ... but The Girl didn't catch either his first name or the university's ..." I racked my brains, turn turn creak creak, scream scream ... Finally there was a flash of light. Roscoe Wright! When first I had known Roscoe Wright we were in The War together; Navy Corpsmen, we trained for duty with the Marines together; Roscoe was a lusty and muscular young fellow who spent his weekends mostly making love to what were in them sexist days called FemFans; I had last seen him on a tropical island, pouring beer on his head, as he was forbidden by the rules of the First Day Antinomian Church (as I, cribbing from Sinclair Lewis, shall call it), with which he was then at least officially attached, to pour it in his mouth: but I shall blow the whistle: it ran down his face and he licked! Well, well, and after all these years! Hm. Hadn't I heard ... Yes. I had heard. He was a professor at a university. Of art. Hm. Well, maybe he wanted me to pose. Wouldn't he be the first time someone had. Albert Morse, the well-known photographer said that I reminded him of Tennyson.

However.

No, it wasn't Professor Roscoe Wright. It turned out to be Professor David Wright. "I am at Michigan State University at East Lansing," he said. "My name is David Wright. You may have heard that we are having Clarion/East here and --"

"No, I haven't, Professor Wright," I said, heavily. "They don't tell me these things."

--and we would like you to be one of this year's Clarion visiting writers, and --"



"I feel it my duty to advise you, Professor Wright," I said, heavily, "that three of my last term's disgruntled students are suing me through the Disgruntled Student's Process for having given them lower marks than they felt they deserved."

"--and one reason why we'd like to have you is because of your reputation as being a tough but kindly marker ... Hello? Hello?"

Out into the hall I floated. Katinka, Seymour, and Flo were there. Glowering at me. I smiled beatifically. "They asked me back," I said. "They asked me back!"

# # # # #

I flew there, all the way. And though, down below, thousands of people (well, maybe ten or twelve) were clamoring on the barricades for the public's right to be attended by airline stewardesses with hairy legs, bad dispositions, moustaches and paunches and a strong smell of stale cigar smoke -- in short, just like AMTRAK conductors -- well... someday, maybe ... not just yet. I was met at the airport by Eddie and Ajay Budrys and David Wright. Ajay looked more like the original Lithuanian Grizzly Bear than ever; Eddie looked just as she had twenty years before, videlicet, lovely. D. Wright I had never met before and so had not a clue what he had looked like twenty years ago, and considering that he immediately gave me a Meal Ticket, I didn't care.

That was my beginning with Clarion 80.

The atmosphere was some different (I think) Clarion 72 or was it 73? Hardly a man now alive ... Instead of the U MA baronial hall with rugs covered with sprawling students (and one back-warping dumb visitant) the MSU sessions were held in regular classrooms, close to and hard upon others being used by organizations such as The Interparietal Conference on Family Planning in Palau, Pelelu, and Patagonia and SATRAP (Society American-Transylvanian for Rat-proofing); the chairs were stern, there were no rugs, but thank God! there was coffee! My constant, and I am not being rhetorical or oxymoronic, my constant inability to find my way from my ex officio suite of rooms down the labyrinthine ways either to the classrooms or the restaurant ... or for that matter, anywhere else... resulted finally in my being provided with guide-students.

On the other hand, there seem-

ed to be spirited Inter-Galactic Fun House on their dorm floor -- much to the bafflement and irritation of the Stern Person in Charge: members of the Interparietal Conference didn't put funny signs, found-object sculptures and dubious graffiti on their doors; and neither did the people of SATRAP; none of them had a cute, tough kid who rode a bike around the dorm ... etc.

Work submitted was, as always, and I suppose, inevitably, of varied type and quality; so was the reaction of the Clarionteers to my comment(s) at their private sessions. "I greet you at the beginning of a great career," I said to one. "I'm not sure that I want a career," was the response. To another I murmured, "Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful ..." He sighed, "Yes, isn't she?" Outside in the quad, purely by coincidence I must suppose, was another workshop participant, and yes, she was ... beautiful. A good deal of fiction submitted was competent enough to be published, by no means all of it contained that breath-catching thrill which comes upon a new discovery of a real, fresh new talent: enough, enough, that any of it did. And some of it did did.

I said to one, "This is fine, fine, fine; it is damn fine, fine. But it needs more work, more work, more work." She said, "I'm going up to my room and work my little buns off."

To another --

ME: Your criticism on the work of others was so fine that I am shocked to find your own work not at all as good as I had hoped. In fact, I find it not good at all. I feel you have mistaken your talent, and I think you ought to be, and in fact will be, a critic, instead.

HE: Not on the sole opinion of one single person, I won't be.

Well, good for you, kid. Quite correct. The passage of time will tell and I look forward to reading your criticism.

And to yet another: "You are a grown man with a profession in which I understand you excel and there is no reason why I should not tell you that I find your stuff here absolutely, almost, without any merit at all. Your plots are preposterous, your characters cardboard, your ideas neither fresh nor freshly-handled, and I cannot encourage you to continue writing."

He said that he thought I was right. "You're right," he said. "I've really got to work on those

characters. Well, I want to thank you," he said, shaking my hand. "You've been very helpful." And went out as cheerfully as had come in.

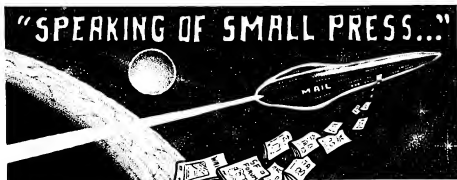
Well, soon enough the week was over. Damon and Kate Wilhelm Knight arrived, he looking like a Thomas Hart Benson mural of a benign John Brown, his beard following him in at intervals; Kate as sweet and rosy as the day I saw them married ("saw them!" I was his Best Man!); Dave Wright, whose never-obtrusive presence kept the whole madcap crew and ship afloat, pressed my paycheck and my return ticket (Air! give me Air!) into my hand ... as soon as I had relinquished the Meal Ticket ...

Somewhere, recently, I have written in one of my unnumbered and perhaps, unnumberable, Notebooks of Another Writer, the comment of an English author ... British, I mean ... whose? Anthony Powell's? Lord David Cecil's? Somebody else's? Whoever, may he forgive my having mislaid the notebook, Note and all. I quote from memory (though, mind you, a demned good memory): "It is generally agreed that, while writing cannot be taught, it may, unaccountably, be learned."

I ended on an anecdote. The cash registers in the restaurant at Lyman Briggs Hall (the graduate student center where Clarion 80 was lodged and counseled and victimized) (note: I may have these details slightly wrong. I am vast, I contain multitudes, some of which may be wrong)--the cash registers are so up-to-date that the tabs don't have numbers on them, no: in a futuristic fashion undreamed of even by Gernsback's RALPH 124C41+, the tabs have instead the names of the foods! The cashier merely scans the tray, taps the keys reading (for example) Crottled Greeps, Grilled Grulzack, and Whipped Pa-toooy: lo! the Machine totals up the costs of these items, and out comes a tape with the price! Marvelous! Only, one lunchtime, the Machine wasn't working! The poor cashiers had to figure it out themselves! And, as the one in my chow-line toiled at this, I said, lightly, "Maybe what you really need here is an elderly Chinese gentleman with an abacus." She smiled wanly, but the cashier alongside of her leaned over, and ere I passed on with my tray, I heard her ask "Are there many foreigners here?"

--Clarion 80, East and East Lansing, I loved you, I loved you

--Will you ever ask me back?



## By Darrell Schweitzer

I haven't done this column for several issues now, so the magazines have piled up, no matter. Most of them are so infrequent that the issues that arrived six months ago are still the current ones.

To reiterate quickly for anyone who just came in, this column is about fiction published in non-newsstand magazines which is worth reading for its own sake (rather than as a learning exercise or because the author is your friend). That is to say, professional quality fiction. I don't believe there is any "small press field" beyond the strictest publishing sense, or that there are any "semi-pro standards." There are just good stories and bad ones.

And speaking of bad ones, the 8th issue of INTERZONE contains several, which dismays me greatly. There are a couple items of interest, to be sure. Philip K. Dick's previously unpublished "Strange Memories of Death" is another exercise in the quiet desperation typical of his short fiction. It isn't SF or fantasy, but it is worth publishing in a magazine like INTERZONE. Presumably the majority of readers will want to see it. Scott Bradfield's "Unmistakably the Finest" is also a good story, a funny/sad/absurd piece about a woman who tries to escape her bad life by praying for money (via a Reverend like-type evangelist). For a while the magic works. Then things start going wrong. Bradfield is an INTERZONE discovery and this is only his second story but he shows enormous promise.

The rest of the issue, aside from sort-of-a-poem by J.G. Ballard runs from trivial to murky to opaque and back again. "Dreamers" by Kim Newman, the only science fiction story in the issue, takes an ancient idea (murder with dream-tapes) and merely presents it, otillising completely uninteresting char-

acters. Routine slushpile stuff, I say. Maria Fitzgerald's "Experiment with Time" just runs on too long with a figure of speech. There isn't enough to the idea to make a story. Andy Soutter's "McGonagall's Lear" doesn't seem to have anything to do with its promising title (William McGonagall was a 19th century literary bag-person, the most awesomely awful poet English has ever known; if you don't believe me, look up LAST POETIC GBMS published by David Winter & Son Ltd., 1974), and while it is possible to tell what is going on within a scene, it is (to borrow a term which I think comes from Ben Bova) *macromurky*: the parts do not connect or form any whole. Also there is no clear tone to the thing. It might be intended to be funny. I can't tell.

This is by far the weakest issue of INTERZONE yet, and a long way down from some of the earlier ones. What has gone wrong? I think avant-gardism has set in. Think of it as a form of dry rot. We've seen the process run its course in SF before. In the quest for originality, an editor will put more and more emphasis on things which are not stories: odd prose constructs, fragments, assorted gimmick pieces. In a sense, "experimental writing" means an attempt to fill a page with prose without telling a story (which would be, alas, hopelessly conventional). Before long the magazine or anthology becomes known for this sort of thing. It sets a bad example for newcomers. Writers who haven't yet learned to tell a story make a virtue out of their lack of technique. Some of them get published. The problem is that most readers prefer stories; coherent narratives of fiction events, with characters, ideas, plots. The experienced writers,

the big names, often contribute their best work to such publications (since such editors usually do take genuinely innovative work along with routine avant-gardism) but the readers perceive the book or magazine as containing two or three really good pieces and a lot of garbage. Few people want to wade through it. Sales drop sharply. (The moral: A minimum standard of readability for every story is just as important as having one or two brilliant pieces in the issue.) This very clearly happened to ORBIT, and it contributed to the demise of NEW WORLDS. QUARK started out with a terminal case. I hope INTERZONE can reverse the process before it's too late.

Of course it is only logical that such a limited-interest field as "experimental" writing should be found in little magazines. Scott Edelman's LAST WAVE is overtly dedicated to bringing back the New Wave of the 1960s. I don't think he quite sees the irony of that: such a revival of the past is inherently conservative, just like the attempts by various other editors to bring back the spirit of WEIRD TALES of the 1930s. Says he in the editorial in issue #2:

"I want the writers I publish to work out in that dangerous area where only great talent wielded with precise, concerted effort can carry them through safely. I don't want anyone, either out of haste, laziness, or fear, falling back on the cliché bit of dialogue, the seen-before plot twist, the expected metaphor." (P. 2)

All very noble, but this is exactly where the magazine fails. If anything, it spotlights the "experimental" story's curious inability to evolve. "Intrusions" by Garter Scholz, published in the second issue is a completely conventional bit of avant-gardism. It is very well written, no doubt, but it is the old story of the angst-ridden unfulfilled artist, told, as these things usually are, in short synoptic sections, without any really developed scenes. Lots of sex though, and a uniform tone of slow agony throughout. Inasmuch as LAST WAVE is a pastiche of SF's past, this is the ideal story for it. Lots of these appeared in the late '60s. With very little difference, it appeared frequently in the literary magazines of the '50s, and probably much earlier. The only cliché Scholz seems to have left out is the vaguely-described electronic artform of the future, which tended to help make these stories more clearly science fiction, and

therefore saleable. Scholz's sensitive/sullen young artist is merely a composer of music.

To be fair, this is actually a pretty good story. It reads well. It is an above-average specimen of its type, but its type is as familiar as the old ANALOG problem-solver.

Also very conventional is Ian Watson's "Letters from the Monkey Alphabet" which is a simple, vaguely humorous piece about a hippie girl reincarnated as a chimp. She is able to remember her past life as a human, gets to a typewriter and writes an account of her adventures, but scientists destroy the evidence because they don't want to believe it. A pleasant trifle. The only thing "experimental" about it is the way the story is divided up into sections labeled with letters of the alphabet. But the letters do not relate to the contents of the sections, which could just as readily have been numbered.

The rest of the issue consists of Thomas Disch's libretto for an opera of FRANKENSTEIN (hard to judge since we can't hear the music), some poems and two stories that fail for familiar reasons. Ronald Anthony Cross's "Slightly Pre-Kwatz" is a fumbling attempt at the kind of lyrical SF Zelazny used to do so well 15 years ago. He starts with a sweeping, poetic flourish, but then makes a beginner's mistake: having gotten rather murky in all that fancy writing, he stops the story dead for a long expository lump, which in a slush-pile story somehow always begins on page 3.

Very disappointing from this writer. And then we have Rachel Pollack's "Lands of Stone" which also has a definite poetic quality to it, but just keeps larding on the strange images and situations until all logic is lost. The story is actually an imaginary land/mythological fantasy, of the sort Lord Dunsany wrote so well prior to World War I, but Pollack lacks his sense of form. "Lands of Stone" had it been cut to about half its length and rendered more coherent, might have been very good. But I somehow don't think she'll learn discipline in LAST WAVE.

The first issue of the magazine was better, by the way. Steve Rasnic Tem's "The Enormous Lover" is a very striking story, about a man who finds himself strangely attracted to an enormous nude woman who ultimately covers the whole world. It's told in a low-key manner reminiscent of Ballard's "The Drowned Giant." "The Next Dwarf" by John Sladek is a funny/sad story about an alien visitor who finds himself hopelessly trapped on banal talk

shows. Avram Davidson's "Full Chicken Richness" is a slight, but fun exercise in typical Davidson folksiness, though not as strong a story as much of his other recent work. Tom Disch's "Attila on Fifth Avenue" is a humorous sketch. There is nothing particularly controversial in this issue either, but there is more worth reading. Don't give up on LAST WAVE but don't get your hopes too high either.

To get on to the more typical sort of small press magazine: the weird/horror/fantasy/neo-WEIRD TALES type. The major titles all have new issues out.

WHISPERS 19/20 maintains the usual high production standards (color cover by Kevin Johnson, typeset, perfect-bound, good paper), and all of the stories are of reasonable quality. The issue is, in part, a tribute to Whitley Strieber, author of THE WOLFEN, THE HUNGER, etc. There's a good interview with him. Strieber comes across as a sincere writer (i.e. someone driven to write horror fiction rather than someone cashing in) who has had several nasty things happen to him in his life. He can give a terrifying anecdote in a very short space. But as a fiction writer, he is both surprisingly crude and surprisingly creative. I can't think of anyone else who would write like this:

"Mandy strode away toward the garden gate. Beyond it she saw a forest that hadn't been there before.

"A most unusual forest. From here it didn't look too nice. It seemed to be made of enormous human legs, festering with sores and ooze ...

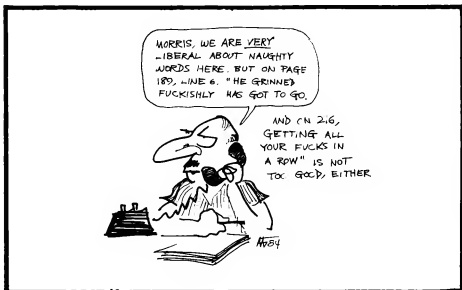
"The odor of the forest was pretty bad. Gas gangrene must smell like this ..." (P. 38)

That's from an excerpt from a novel, CATMAGIC, which may well be one of the most striking dream fantasies ever written, crippled by some of the worst prose ever written.

Strieber's short story "Perverts" is better done, but less ambitious. It's a cruel tale that ends in a moment of genuinely shocking physical horror, the likes of which we haven't seen since George Fielding Elliot's "The Copper Bowl."

In fact, most of the stories in this issue seem to end in genuinely chilling moments. I think I have figured out what makes a typical WHISPERS story: a slow build-up, a general drabness of both characters and setting, suddenly leading to one fierce fright, often from very physical causes. In this issue we have, let's see ... one hobo castrated and burned alive for the amusement of the decadent rich, a musician who finds himself joining a corpse-orchestra, a nasty little boy who (it is revealed at the end of the story) makes adults come to bad ends, another nasty little boy who does it more overtly with knives, a trained dog that rips a woman's throat out, a lover who turns out to be just a head sewn on to the body of an ape-like demon and an imaginary companion/animate doll who trips Daddy on the basement stairs so he bashes his head in.

The highlights of this compendium of mayhem include "The Legend of Santa Claus" by C. Bruce Hunter, which gives a very weird variant of the traditional legend; "Masai



Witch" by Stephen Goldin, which makes a good use of African lore, but suffers from being part of a series (so the protagonist is a given, and if you don't know the series, he is a blank); "Danse Macabre" by Phillip C. Heath, which is a very impressive Victorian period piece (both in its details and its pastiche of Victorian literary style); and "One for the Horrors" by David Schow, concerning a magical movie theatre which shows prints of old horror movies containing scenes not seen elsewhere. There are pretty good stories by Michael Bishop, Manly Wade Wellman and Gerald Page, and Dennis Etchison and C.C. Palaski. Charles Grant's "When I Grow Up" is notably weak, merely presenting the familiar super-child (a la "It's a Good Life") idea again, with no development. There's even a story by me, "The Phantom Knight" which I wrote at Clarion in 1973 and which David Drake helped me revise around 1974. I find that I still like it, but it is very different from anything I would do today. Also: An interview with Ray Bradbury.

The highlight of WEIRDBOOK 19 is, of course, the Stephen King story. It's a novelet, Cthulhu Mythos no less, which I would rate as Moderately Scary. So far, it is not available elsewhere.

The rest of the issue is not to be sneezed at either. By coincidence, it's a special Roman Empire issue. My story in it is about a sorcerous resurrection of Alexander the Great in an attempt to stave off the chaos of the Third Century. The Romans are presented sympathetically. But Richard Tierney's First-Century adventurer/magician Simon of Gitta doesn't like Romans at all, and in "The Dragons of Mons Fractus," we see a particularly nasty fate prepared for Pontius Pilate. As long as the story sticks to this, it goes along very well, but it falls apart at the end with a new, irrelevant fantastic element added: a deus-ex-machina provided by extra-terrestrials. Good stories by Gerald W. Page, Steve Rasnic Tem, Janet Fox and E.S. Faragher (a new writer). A dumb one by Jessica Salmonson and an unreadable one by J.N. Williamson, both of which are fortunately quite short. WEIRDBOOK has always been stronger on long fiction.

FANTASY TALES #12 contains several interesting reprints. There's a Robert Bloch story from a 1939 STRANGE STORIES which is overwritten and obvious, but of interest as a rare piece of early Bloch. C. Bruce Hunter's "Pharaoh's Revenge" (from SORCERER'S APPRENTICE) is a genuinely clever one-punch short-

short. Dennis Etchison's "You Can Go Now" (from MIKE SHAYNE MYSTERY MAG.) has the feeling of genuine nightmare. One of the originals, "The Stones Would Weep," is by me. It is the first of the "Goddess" series, the only one written before the novel, THE SHATTERED GODDESS. Of the others, I most liked "The Green Man" by Kelvin Jones. The eldritch evil of which the blurb speaks is a familiar one, but the story has good touches. I couldn't finish "In the Labyrinth" by Simon R. Green. I'm getting jaded in my old age. These days I give up on stories that do not have a minimally pleasing style. Green's is lurid and overwrought. Also: Robert E. Howard poetry. Good production values. Handsome covers.

DRAGONFIELDS #4 is the latest issue of a very infrequent magazine (it's been years), which has been of reasonably high quality throughout its existence. The highlight of this issue is a Tanith Lee section, including a new, long novelet by her, an interview, and even some of her artwork (which is comparable to the black & whites of the Dillons, with a dash of Beardsley). The other writers are mostly unknowns (I have heard of Ardath Mayhar and Gordon Linzner), some of professional quality, some not. Albert Manachino notably has a lot to learn (first of all, that there is no such word as "pleafully": that "wavered," "cautioned," "regretted," "offered," "corrected," "confided," etc. should not be used as synonyms for "said;" and that such writing went out with Frank Merriwell). Again, an attractive magazine. Good art and production values.

FANTASY BOOK for June 1984 contains an installment of a Brian Lumley serial, stories by Jaygee Carr, Kris Neville, Hugh B. Cave, Horace Gold (a reprint), and even Robert E. Howard (a Solomon Kane fragment completed by Fred Blosser). Color covers. I will review this in detail in a future column.

CRYPT OF CTHULHU #22 confirms that the most prophetic line I ever wrote was one in my story "The Last Horror Out of Arkham," in which after witnessing the incredibly complex way copies of the NECRONOMICON are mass-produced (so they can turn up in all the stories), remarks, "But wouldn't it be simpler just to publish it in paperback?"

"Don't be silly," the villain remarks, "people would think Lin Carter wrote it."

Well, now he is writing it. There's an excerpt, "The Thing Under Memphis," which fons a very slight, pseudo-Smithian (Clark Ashton, that is) narrative but does not live up to the reputation of the Dread Work. Gary Myers has a short-short, "The Priest of Mlok," which like all his fiction, pastiches Lovecraft's pastiches of Dunsany. And there's yet another Robert E. Howard fragment, a real barrel-scrapping, which is, in a sad way, a genuine record of changing cultural attitudes. ("Can't you understand that this is Africa and not America? You can't go out and shoot a Negro any time you want to as you do there ....")

But seriously, folks, CRYPT is a wonderful magazine, mostly devoted to non-fiction, ranging from serious criticism or humor, all of a Lovecraftian nature. Editor Price shows genuine imagination and a lot of energy. He's published an issue filled with all the famous Lovecraft revisions -- before Lovecraft revised them -- an original Clark Ashton Smith story, a booklet of previously unpublished HPL verse, not to mention major articles by the leading scholars in the field, and even a telescript, "The Cthulhuers," which is what would have happened on THE HONEYMOONERS if Jackie Gleason and his friend had belonged to a Cthulhu cult rather than the Racon Lodge. With very appropriate artwork.

ALTERNATELY, WE COULD JUST TRANSPLANT YOUR HEAD ON A NEW BODY.

HEART, LUNGS  
KIDNEYS,  
LIVER AND  
SEX CHANGE  
IN ONE  
FELL  
SWOOP!



THE LITTLE MAGAZINE is a mainstream small press magazine, and outside the scope of this column (although SF people are involved: David Hartwell and Ginjer Buchanan), but you might like to know that Volume 14, No. 1-2 (a double issue) contains a beautiful story by Ursula Le Guin, "May's Lion." It's fiction-about-fiction, in which the author takes an event as it happened and then fictionalises it as it should have. Otherwise the issue is devoted to modern poetry. There was one by Disch that I quite liked. Otherwise the poems read like murky prose with ragged margins. But then I get the same impression from the poetry in AMERICAN POETRY REVIEW, THE NEW YORKER and most little mags I see. My own feeling is that poetry died in English more than a generation ago; that contemporary "poets" have lost even the memory of what poetry was; and that (since we can't go back to 19th Century forms and expect the result to express the visions of the 20th Century) the only thing to do is wait and hope that someone will re-invent it. But that is another subject.

\*\*\*\*\*

INTERZONE: (American agent) Scott Bradfield, 145 E. 18th St., #5, Coss Mesa, CA, 92627. \$10 for 4 issues.

LAST WAVE: Scott Edelman, POB # 3206, Grand Central Station, NY, NY, 10163; \$8 for 4 issues.

WHISPERS: Stuart Schiff, 70 Highland Ave., Binghamton, NY, 13905; \$8.95 for 2 double-issues.

WEIRDOBOOK: W. Paul Ganley, BOX 149, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY, 14226-0149; \$22.50 for 7 issues; single copies \$5+75¢ postage per order.

FANTASY TALES: Stephen Jones, 130 Park View, Wembley, Middx, HA9 6JU, England; American rate: \$2.50 per copy + \$1.00 postage.

DRAGONFIELDS: Charles de Lint, POB #9480, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3V2, Canada; \$5 per copy.

FANTASY BOOK: POB #60126, Pasadena, CA, 91106; \$11 for 4 issues; single copies \$3.

CRYPT OF CTHULHU: Robert M. Price, 35 Elmbrook Place, Bloomfield, NJ, 07003; \$16 for 8 issues; single copies \$2.

THE LITTLE MAGAZINE: Dragon Press, POB #78, Pleasantville, NY, 10570. \$12 for 4 issues; Single copies \$3; Double issues (like the one reviewed) \$5.

SEX IS  
UNIMPORTANT



THERE ARE TWO  
KINDS OF PEOPLE  
WHO CAN SAY  
THAT



AND THEN I SAW... CONTINUED.

THE SURVIVORS (R)

lives down to its reviews. The rap on this one is that Robin Williams was allowed to indulge himself in wildman schtick and so ruined the movie. Walter Matthau seemed embarrassed at times, as his wry, understated humor was kicked in the groin by Williams' exuberant exaggeration.

These two unemployed businessmen are trying to escape a syndicate hit man played despairingly by Jerry Reed. They go into the wilds of New Hampshire and Williams is converted to the Survivalist religion. The survivalist leader who preaches armed preparation for after-the-bomb scenarios helps plummet this film into absurdity.

The more I think of this movie, the worse it gets. You couldn't believe one minute of it.

RIGHT OF WAY (NR)

tells the story of two old people played utterly convincingly by James Stewart and Bette Davis, who want to die by suicide pact since the woman has a terminal disease which will kill her soon. He cannot face life without her.

There is, naturally, a daughter who cannot handle this sensible way out, and causes all kinds of problems for the old couple.

Frankly, I found this too depressing to watch all the way through.

TEN YEARS AGO IN SF — SUMMER, 1974

BY ROBERT SABELLA

WORLDS OF IF ceased publication while GALAXY MAGAZINE cut back both page count and rate of payment.

The announced reason was a shortage of paper but this was the first of a series of financial cutbacks by the publisher that ultimately killed GALAXY as well ... The Hugo Awards for 1973 were announced:

Best Novel was Arthur C. Clarke's RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, Best Novella was James Tiptree Jr.'s "The Girl Who Was Plugged In," Best Novelette was Harlan Ellison's "The Death-bird," Best Short Story was Ursula Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" and Best Dramatic Presentation was Woody Allen's SLEEP-ER ... Ian and Betty Ballantine left Ballantine Books which they had founded over twenty years previously. They intended to form a new publishing company (their third, including Bantam Books in 1940) to publish "large format illustrated paperback gift books"

... This season saw the publication of a bonanza of major science fiction stories including Ursula K. Le Guin's THE DISPOSSESSED (which received near-unanimous rave reviews) and "The Day Before The Revolution" in GALAXY, Philip K. Dick's FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID, Terry Carr's annual THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR, George R.R. Martin's "A Song for Lya" in ANALOG, Michael Bishop's "Cathadonian Odyssey" in F&SF, Robert Silverberg's "Schwartz Among The Galaxies" in STELLAR 1 and Norman Spinrad's "Riding The Torch" in THE THREADS OF TIME.

# SMALL PRESS NOTES

THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY  
ALIKE By Philip K. Dick  
Published by Mark Ziesing, POB 806,  
Willimantic, CT 06226.

\$19.50 plus \$1.50 postage.  
Hardcover, with bookplate and dj.

This novel, mainstream, written in 1960 and commissioned by a major publisher, but never accepted for publication, fails because of Dick's too-subtle or incomplete characterization of his protagonist, Leo Rumsible.

Leo is a small-town real estate agent/developer in northern California. He is a Jew. He is somewhat resented and ostracized in his town because of anti-semitism. Yet there is a powerful idealism and love for humanity in Leo which surfaces in ways which lose him important clients (as when he throws out a couple about to buy an expensive house because they are racists) and which virtually bankrupts him later as he takes on the huge costs of replacing old, dangerous water mains and pipes for the town because a rare disease can be/was carried in the water.

This idealism is admirable but inexplicable and borders on masochism and a will-to-fail. Phil didn't make Leo's idealism and altruism really believable or acceptable to the reader.

Running parallel to the Rumsible story are the interacting lives of his neighbors, Walter and Sherry Dombrosio. Here we see a major Dick theme---the bitchy, emulating wife---coming to full bloom. (Sherry's viewpoints are well presented; she seems a feminist and a strong, independent person unwilling to be subservient to an immature, selfish man.)

For that matter, Leo's wife, Janet, is almost the same type, though in the crunches she is more aware of Leo's qualities than anyone, and supports him.

Except for the apparent failing in regard to Leo's inexplicable idealism, Dick's detailing of character all through this novel is marvelous: the hate, envy, jealousy, anger, rage...of everyone in this novel...rings painfully true to life.

Many times I had the feeling Dick was writing these husband-wife quarrels from true experience, out of his guts.

There is a kind of mystery in this story, too, as Rumsible, the sheriff and state health officers track down the origins of the skeleton found buried behind Leo's house, and the disfiguring disease which has in the past (and recently) afflicted some of the local residents.

So. A slightly flawed novel that nevertheless is an absorbing read and intriguing as well.

The edition is a collector's item and very likely will increase in value.

Phil Dick wanted to be a mainstream writer and yet did his best work in science fiction, a Rathole of a genre he disliked and in which he felt trapped.

He wrote ten mainstream novels, and only his success in sf is making their publication possible now after his death.

Life is full of vicious ironies.

## MEMORY HOLE #1

This is the first mailing of a new apa: The Revisionist APA. Libertarian in origins and focus, Samuel

E. Konklin III, the Official Editor (I guess) of the apa, nevertheless offers ultimate freedom of content to any prospective contributor/member. You must send 50 copies of your offering (which for good reasons must be on 8-1/2" x 11" paper) and the cost is 50¢ for each two-sides. Uh...thus a ten-page 50-copy zine sent to him for inclusion in the next mailing (for example) would cost \$2.50 for your share of the mailing costs.

This apa is 'explicitly and totally open to all points of view, no matter how disagreeing or disagreeable.'

I'm mortally tempted to join, but can't see the time in which to do it until next year. I hope this apa survives that long.

Oh, one more info bit: the schedule is bi-monthly.

## INDEX TO THE SEMI-PROFESSIONAL FANTASY MAGAZINES---1983

Compiled by Jerry Boyajian & Kenneth R. Johnson.

TWACI PRESS, POB 87, MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Mail order copy: \$3.50; not available at wholesale rates.

This reference magazine/volume covers the following magazines: ARGONAUT, DARK HORIZONS, DRAGON-FIELDS, ELDRITCH TALES, ETCHINGS & OYDSSEYS, FANTASY BOOK, FANTASY MACABRE, FANTASY TALES, THE HORROR SHOW, INFINITY, INTERZONE, LAST WAVE, MOONSCAPE, NIGHT VOYAGES, ORACLE, OWLFLIGHT, PANDORA, POTBOILER, RIGEL, SPACE AND TIME, SPACE GRITS, WEIRD-BOOK, WHISPERED LEGENDS, WHISPERS. Plus Author and Artist Index.

All lovingly done by offset on cream colored paper, 8-1/2 x 11.

# A lot of items got put aside for reading and perusal, not the least of which----oh, what a phrase!---is



# RICHARD E. GEIS

WINNOWING STAR, a novel by Richard Hilliard, published by Oz Press. Hang in there, folk. I'm back into reading again.

**HOW TO FIND MISSING PERSONS**  
A Handbook For Investigators  
By Ronald George Eriksen 2  
Loompanics Unlimited  
P.O. Box 1197 Port Townsend, WA  
98368. \$7.95 plus \$2. postage.

This book examines the types of missing persons, and methods/sources for locating them such as arrest records, banks, courthouse records, credit bureaus, credit card records, drivers license records, ex-neighbors, post office, telephone records, welfare rolls, and simple things like phone books and city directories. And more.

It's very, very difficult to live in our society and not leave a trail or a signpost, and also difficult to change your name and get new credit, ID, etc. Government has a vested interest in keeping you in sight and accessible; it makes every effort to make it virtually impossible and/or illegal to go away and start over under a new identity.

Yet, if you are interested in disappearing successfully, this book can tell you how to avoid being easily found.

For a writer, this would make another excellent reference book.

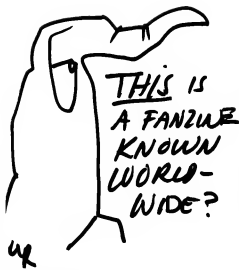
**THE CRIMINAL USE OF FALSE IDENTIFICATION—A Study by the United States Department of Justice.** \$9.95  
Loompanics Unlimited (as above)

False ID nowadays is used mostly in the drug trade and in forgery, but fugitives find ways, and we must not forget the webtacks and welfare fraud.

In ways, you know, these govt. studies (rarely seen by the general public) are how-to manuals for the would-be or already is criminal. It used to be a young man learned the fine points of crime from old cons in prison, but now the U.S. government makes a study of it all and publishes it.

Again, for the writer, a broad-based, wide-ranging examination of false ID, and a good reference.

Forgot to mention the \$2. extra charge for postage and handling. I may as well mention how irritating it is to deal with a mail order house which asks you to enclose extra \$\$ for 'postage and handling'; to me that's stupid. There should be one mail order price which includes postage and handling. HA! The time people order a book at the stated price and don't notice the separate little squib about an extra p. and s. charge. The publisher must then write for the extra.... What a hassle. Delay and bad feelings ensue.



**FANDOM DIRECTORY #6**, 1984-85 Edition, Ed. Mariane S. Hopkins; Pub. Harry A. Hopkins, Published by Fandom Computer Services, (POB #4278, San Bernardino, CA 92409), \$9.95, paperback, full color cover.

Nearly 400 pages of information, a source book of the SF genre.

**ZORA** Written by and illustrated by Fernando Fernandez, Ed. Bernd Metz, Jan. 1984, Catalan Communications, (c) 1981, 8 1/2 X 11 1/2", 110 pp., Graphic novel, \$11.95, Paperback. Adult fantasy/SF in full color.

Fernandez's drawing, coloring, and visualization skills--say rather genius--is the magnetic attraction in this book. The panels are often freeform works of pure art, dazzling and lovely. They make you wish to see the originals, to see huge enlargements to better appreciate and enjoy this marvelous talent.

The story--Zora, a clone of the space world Honeycomb which is inhabited only by lovely, gene-engineered women, discovers a group of men in hibernation capsules. Men are unknown, considered aliens. The truth of the clone women's origins on nearby Earth is kept from them by evil scientists and police.

Earth is a jungle of mutated animals and vegetation.

Dangers galore as Zora and her allies and two of the revived men seek to overthrow the Honeycomb tyrants...

This volume is well worth the money to an art lover, let alone a graphic story aficionado.

**MUTANT WORLD** By Jan Strnad & Richard Corben, Fantagor Press, June 1983, (c) 1982, 8 1/2 X 11 1/2", Paperback, 80 pp., \$7.95.

Richard Corben's magic brush is the star--as he and writer Jan Strnad create a post-atomic war

story and people it with humans and comic mutant creatures.

Survival is the name of life in this stark environment. There is a lovely, very busy young woman in this story, too, naturally.

The story-telling, panel-by-panel, is stolid, simplistic, a bit too juvenile for my taste.

**THE SURVIVORS--** "The Eyes That Burned"---Volume Two. \$4.95 + \$1. Fantagraphics Books, 196 West Haviland Lane, Stamford, CT 06903.

Another after-the-bomb survival story in the southwest USA, this time, with two buddies encountering fellow survivors and fellow enemies.

Nothing spectacular in this storyline or artwork. Hermann, a European artist, is very good with ink and F. Raymond is excellent in coloring (an art in itself).

**# AN APPRECIATIVE NOTE:** Buzz Dixon sent along two issues of the comic, DESTROYER DUCK, which he wrote. He writes good! These are very chucklesome, wry, satirical, scripts.

Destroyer Duck--a man with a duck's head--comes wildly alive in a whole-human way. The humor is multifaceted. The exaggeration is delicious.

OUT OF SPACE. NEXT ISSUE I'LL REVIEW LOVE AND ROCKETS #2 AND DALGODA #1-2.

**This Publication...**

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# THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

JUST ANOTHER EPIC

HELLICONIA SUMMER

By Brian Aldiss

Athenum, 1983, 398 pp., \$16.95

Brian Aldiss seems to regard the Helliconia trilogy (the third volume is not yet published) as his masterpiece. Recent items in the SF press have conveyed his enormous enthusiasm for the project. And there have been some rewards: best seller status in England, a John Campbell Memorial Award and I would guess, at least modest sales in the United States.

Certainly he needs that enthusiasm to keep him going. The amount of work that went into this series must have been enormous. Helliconia (and its solar system) is a world created Hal Clement style, from the gravity up, calculations and all. Then it is peopled with a rich variety of cultures, covered with vividly realized lands, inhabited by vivid creatures, etc. I am sure that if this series had been published twenty-five years ago, before DUNE and before (as Jack Chalker once put it) the boxed set became the basic unit of publishing, it would have become a classic. Now its impact in this country has hardly been explosive. (Could the popularity in England be a bit of nationalism? Most of the epics, from DUNE to THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN, have been by Americans.) American fandom hardly knows of its existence, in my experience. The few people who have read the first volume didn't like it, and say they don't plan to read the second. There is none of that excitement that's in the air when something really important comes out. (I had planned to ignore Heinlein's FRIDAY, but could not escape the reports coming from every quarter that, for the first time since 1965, there was a new Heinlein book that was good. In our close little society, word of mouth is an indicator. On Aldiss and HELLICONIA: silence.) It seems to have gotten lost in the mass, as just another epic.

Worse yet, the reviewer in ANALOG recently pronounced HELLICONIA SUMMER "awful."

Well, it isn't awful, but there is a problem. While the Helliconia books are filled with vivid scenes and details, the story itself is weak. The plots and characters are not at all worthy of the grandeur of the setting. HELLICONIA SPRING dealt with the rebirth of knowledge after a long, barbarous ice age. It covered many years, and the characters were no more than shadows flitting across the page. HELLICONIA SUMMER covers the space of only a few months. The planet is nearing the hottest end of its orbit (or, more precisely, of the orbit of its primary; the system has two suns), and the political balance of nations shifts, as the equatorial lands begin to (excuse me) take the heat. The foreground story deals with a king who must put his queen aside for political reasons. There are religious stirrings. The phagors, the non-human inhabitants of the planet who flourish in the cold times, have resolved to wait the season out, then finish off the humans.

But while the characters are convincing enough, we don't care about any of them. Interest is briefly aroused when a youth from the Earth observation platform orbiting the planet comes down to the planet (even though it means certain death due to bacterial infections) just to meet this famous queen whose adventures everyone has been studying back on the station,

but this isn't enough. The plot has the makings of a splendid romance, and the overall series is of course, epic, but reader involvement is almost completely lacking. There are lots of striking set pieces, but no emotions are aroused. And emotional response is the one completely universal foundation of storytelling. Throughout the millennia, in whatever form storytelling may have taken, audiences have always wanted to feel something as a result of the fictional experiences of the characters. Something. Anything. Homer wanted to move his audience to awed admiration at the virtues of his heroes. Plautus wanted to make people laugh. Had either of them failed, we would not be reading them today. Fiction is not, at the bottom of it, an intellectual experience for the reader, but an emotional one. Aldiss has failed at precisely this point. All his brilliant worldbuilding may manage to maintain some level of interest, but the book is still very put-downable.

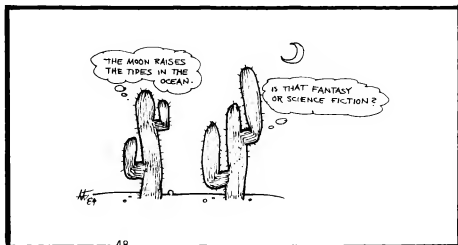
HAVE I GOT A NEAT IDEA!

THE PRACTISE EFFECT

By David Brin

Bantam, 1984, 279 pp., \$2.75

David Brin has won a Nebula for STARTIDE RISING and he may well





win a Hugo. He has definitely arrived as a Hot New Writer, rather the way John Varley had by about 1977.

It's a perilous position. Many new writers have not survived it. Brin, like the Varley of 1977, like so many others, is suddenly in the forefront of the field before his talents have fully developed. One can only hope that he will remain above all the adulation and continue to grow.

THE PRACTISE EFFECT is a surprisingly unambitious book for a writer of such stature, and as long as it is just a lapse, a "vacation" of sorts, I suppose there is no harm done. The danger is that he will settle at this level. So many others have.

This novel has precisely one virtue: a really neat idea. The hero finds himself in an alternate world in which physical laws work differently. Non-living objects must be used constantly so that they will spontaneously improve themselves. A crude stone axe, if used enough, will slowly change into a finely-honed, high-tech artifact. Jailers set prisoners to work battering the prison walls, so that they will increase in strength. Poor people live in new, ramshackle houses, then move out when they have been "practised" into something better. At one point the hero "practises" a zipper into a saw.

Brin has a good imagination, and he's worked out the details of his idea very cleverly. The novel is the very essence of a delightful scientific bull session.

But as fiction, it's rudimentary. The plot is a standard Del Rey Formula Fantasy. Hero finds himself in a strange new world, adjusts, makes friends, has adventures, gets lucky, rescues princess, defeats the bad guy and lives happily ever after. Nobody really gets hurt, or has any strong feelings. Life is so much simpler that way.

Now there's nothing wrong with a lightweight book, but this one, if it didn't have that neat idea, would have no weight at all.

WONDER'S CHILD: MY LIFE IN SCIENCE FICTION By Jack Williamson  
Bluejay Books, 1984, 276 pp., \$15.95

There still aren't a lot of science fictional autobiographies being published, so it's only natural that they be compared with one another. It's a small field.

Jack Williamson, of course, is one of the true pioneers of SF. I



believe that, of all the writers still alive and active, only Frank Belknap Long got started earlier. It's only fitting that Williamson should write his autobiography, since his career has encompassed the whole history of science fiction as a genre.

WONDER'S CHILD is shorter, and far more compact than Asimov's autobiography. Williamson knows what to leave out. He has some sense of form. In this, his book is more like Fred Pohl's THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS, but Williamson is far more introspective. Pohl tended to distance himself from his own autobiography and produce a valuable social document, about what it was like to grow up in the Depression, what it was like to be a fan in the 1930s, what it was like to be a science fiction editor in 1940, etc. Williamson has included plenty of that, illustrating the wide range of his life (as a child, he lived on the barren frontier and traveled by covered wagon; as an adult, he was present, at JPL when Voyagers I and II reached Jupiter), but he puts more emphasis on his own personality, how he slowly came out of a shell of awkwardness and social isolation. I suppose, in part, because I read it recently, and because Bluejay also published it, I can't help but compare this book to DARK VALLEY DESTINY, the de Campian biography of Robert E. Howard. It struck me that Williamson was born into an environment even more backward and intellectually barren than Howard's, but he eventually coped. Howard was sullen and defensive. Williamson was willing to learn. He is genuinely and unaffectedly humble, but I can't help but come away admiring someone who casually mentions how, after being a leader in the field for over forty years, he went to a Milford Conference because he thought his skills needed sharpening. There's something in

that. Williamson, we must remember, was a contemporary of David H. Keller and Stanton Coblenz and Capt. S.P. Meek and Ed Earl Repp and dozens of others who fell by the wayside as science fiction changed again and again. He is one of the very few who made it. From this book you may find out why. Additionally, WONDER'S CHILD offers a fascinating series of glimpses into SF's history and the history of the world for the better part of this century.

NOTED:

THE BOOK OF LOST TALES, PART I  
By J.R.R. Tolkien  
Houghton Mifflin, 1984, 297 pp., \$14.95

This latest Tolkien volume is of more interest to the general reader than some of the other posthumous items. It is more than mere barrel-scrappings, a genuinely independent work of some substance, rather than just an early draft of something. True, some of this very early material made its way into THE SIMARILLION, but it was clearly planned to be a book by itself: a collection of stories and poems with a frame around them. Begun about 1917 and long abandoned, the work is in a rough state as assembled by Christopher Tolkien, who provides notes and critical commentary.

It's interesting, but rough going, mostly because Tolkien's prose in 1917 had not yet the vivid simplicity of THE LORD OF THE RINGS. The descriptions are clotted with run-on sentences, the dialogue consists of declamations rather than people talking, and the archaisms are even clumsy sometimes, but there are flashes of the glory that was to come. You might enjoy shuffling through this pile of old leaves for the occasional glimmer of gold.

# THE ARCHIVES

THE ARCHIVES RECORD RECENT SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY RELEASES, SOMETIMES WITH COMMENTARY OR RELEVANT INFORMATION.

THE ARCHIVES IS A DATA BASE AND MAY SAVE THE READER MONEY AND TIME.

## A

**HOKA** By Poul Anderson & Gordon R. Dickson, TOR, June 1984. (c) 1983 \$2.75. A race of sentient teddy bears who adopt Terran culture, but with confusion between fact & fiction.

**BEARING AN HOURGLASS** By Piers Anthony Del Rey, Aug 1984, 288 pp., \$13.95, Fantasy; Book II of INCARNATIONS OF IMMORTALITY; hardcover original. Norton becomes the Incarnation of Time; with The Hourglass he can time travel.

**BIO OF A SPACE TYRANT — VOL. II: MERCENARY**, Avon, June 1984, \$2.95 By Piers Anthony. ...'Covers the military period in Hope's life in which he seeks the power required to execute his vendetta'...

**ISAAC ASIMOV'S WONDERFUL WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION -2- THE SCIENCE FICTIONAL OLYMPICS**, Ed. by Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg & Charles G. Waugh; Signet, June 1984, \$3.50. Seventeen stories in 356 pages, where the contestants are always changing and a loser of only a microsecond can become a champion in the next millenium.

**WITCHES: ISAAC ASIMOV'S MAGICAL WORLDS OF FANTASY #2** Edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg & Charles G. Waugh, Signet, 1984, \$3.95. Fourteen witch stories in 350 pages.

**ISAAC ASIMOV'S TOMORROW'S VOICES** Davis Publications, May 1984, \$12.95, 287 pages. Fifteen original SF stories collected by the editors of ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE.

**LUCKY STARR AND THE PIRATES OF THE ASTEROIDS** By Isaac Asimov writing as Paul French, Ballantine, 1984, (c) 1953, \$1.95.

Lucky Starr, orphaned by pirates of the Asteroid Belt, must put down a new pirate uprising.

## B

**LUCKY STARR AND THE OCEANS OF VENUS** By Isaac Asimov writing as Paul French, Ballantine, June 1984, (c) 1954, \$1.95. Citizens are being hypnotized, and later cannot remember their acts.

**THE MAN OF GOLD** by M.A.R. Barker, DAW, July 1984, \$3.50, fantasy. A land of gods and demons, wily alien races, various levels of monarchs, where Harsan seeks the forgotten superweapon, the Man of Gold.

**VALENCIES** By Rory Barnes & Damien Broderick, May 1984, University of Queensland Press, \$7.95, paperback. Dominance and submission in 4004 AD where people are immortal and learn effortlessly through peptide implants.

**THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANTARCTICA** by John Calvin Batchelor, Viking Penguin Inc., July 1984, \$6.95. Grim Fiddle, born during the Vietnam war, leads a band of outcasts south to the white desert of Antarctica.

**SHADOW SINGER** By Marcia J. Bennett Ballantine, SF, Sept 1984, \$2.75, Sequel to WHERE THE NI-LACH.

Humans sharing the planet Ner-Draak with the Ni-Lach, turn on the natives in fear of their unusual powers.

**THE REENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD** By Morris Berman, Bantam, May 1984, \$4.50, 416 pp., Non-fiction.

...Using philosophy, history, psychology and anthropology to substantiate his thesis, Berman argues that holistic thought must be revived to protect modern society... 'A startling criticism of the science that shaped today's society -- and a provocative new direction for tomorrow's world.'

**THE BIOFAB WAR** By Stephen Ames Berry, Ace, May 1984, \$2.50

'Earth has been invaded! The problem is, nobody knows it!...

**THE GIRL FROM THE EMERALINE ISLAND** By Robert S. Blum, Ballantine, May 1984, \$2.95. Sixteen-year-old Ellia Kellzie is a girl who doubles as a man in a provincial society.



**SWORD AND SORCERESS** (Ed) Marion Zimmer Bradley, DAW, May 1984, \$2.95. Anthology of heroic fantasy.

**THE MISTS OF AVALON** By Marion Zimmer Bradley, DEL REY, 1984, (c) 1982, (hardcover by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.), \$8.95, 876 pp., Paperback.

The legend of King Arthur retold through women of power behind the throne.

**THE HOUSE BETWEEN THE WORLDS**, By Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ballantine, 1984, (c) 1980, \$2.95, fantasy, Revised & expanded edition. Fenton must return to Alfaz to save the Faerie Queen; he must find the House between the Worlds.

**THE CRUCIBLE OF TIME** by John Brunner 1984, (c) 1982 & 83, Ballantine, \$3.50. The development of a species from medieval city-states to a technological civilization.

**ALIEN DEBT** By F.M. Busby, Bantam, June 1984, \$2.75. A new epic in the saga of Brian Tregare and Rissa Kerguelen.

## C

**UNIVERSE 14** Ed. Terry Carr, Doubleday SF, June 1984, \$11.95, Hardcover anthology of original fiction. Ten stories by established authors and by those new in the genre.

**DOWN TO A SUNLESS SEA** By Lin Carter, DAW, June 1984, \$2.50. Brant was sent to the penal colony at Trivium Charontis on Mars, and has worked his way to freedom.

**DEMONS OF THE DANCING GODS** By Jack L. Chalker, Ballantine, 1st Ed. June 1984, \$2.95, fantasy, Sequel to *THE RIVER OF DANCING GODS*. Joe & Marge are to do spynork for the master sorcerer, Ruddygore.

**THE LAST AMAZON**, A John Grimes Novel by A. Bertram Chandler, DAW, June 1984, \$2.50. Women are transplanted on Sparta, where the Birth Machine has produced only male babies.

**HESTIA** By C.J. Cherryh, DAW, (c) 1979, \$2.25. A dam would allow the colony on Hestia to tame the hostile fauna which hemmed in the river valley. Sam Merritt came to answer their S.O.S.

**MERCHANT'S LUCK**, A Downbelow Station Novel, by C.J. Cherryh, 1984, Methuen London Ltd, (England) (c) 1982, bl.95. Downbelow Station, a small metallic world, is the goal of a desperate race.

**MISSION OF GRAVITY** by Hal Clement Ballantine, 1984, (c) 1954, \$2.75. An adventure into regions where gravity does not obey its laws.

**BLOOD ON THE MOON** By Barney Cohen TOR, June 1984, \$2.50. Mass murder on the moon in 2084.

**THE TITHONIAN FACTOR** By Richard Cowper, May 1984, \$14.95, Victor Gollancz (David & Charles, dist.). A collection of 6 stories on the theme of growing-up disillusionment.

v By A.C. Crispin, Pinnacle Books, May 1984, \$2.95. 'The terrifying novel based on the full, ten-hour NBC-TV miniseries.'

**THE SPECIALIST, MANHATTAN REVENGE** By John Cutter, (#2), Signet, 1984, \$2.25. Jack Sullivan is to wipe out corruption in New York's sex-and-drugs Lower East Side.

## D

**MAGICATS'** Ed. by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois, Ace, June 1984, \$2.95, Fantasy. Eighteen stories. Well-known authors write about magic cats, fey, funny and deadly.

**NEVERYONA** By Samuel R. Delany, Bantam rack-size edition July 1984, (c) 1983, \$3.50, Fantasy. Neveryona, sunken golden city, is the shining symbol for Prin who flees her village on the back of a dragon.

**THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE** By Philip K. Dick, Ziesing, \$19.50, May 1984, 22 pp. First edition hardcover of Dick's 1960 mainstream novel. Fine dj illo by Dell Harris.

**CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON** By Philip K. Dick, Bluejay Books Special Editions, 1984, (c) 1964, \$6.95; *THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH*, \$5.95. **CLANS:** Clans formed on a moon which was once an insane asylum. **TRUTH:** Underground life after the ultimate nuclear war.

**SHADOW OF THE BEAST** By Gerald DiPego, Signet June 1984, \$3.50. In search of Sasquatch in the Northwest, and discovering the beasts within themselves.

**DAUGHTER OF REGALS & OTHER TALES** By Stephen R. Donaldson, Ballantine, April 1984, \$14.95, 337 pp. Eight fantasy tales, including two novellas.

**EXILES OF THE RYNN** by Carole Nelson Douglas, Ballantine, Fantasy, July 1984, \$2.95. Irissa, the sorceress has been betrayed by the rainbow gate which would lead her to her vanished people.

**THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION, FIRST ANNUAL COLLECTION**, Ed. by Gardner Dozois, Bluejay Books, 1984, 575 pp., paperbk, \$9.95. 25 novellas, short stories & novelettes.

**THE MEMOIRS OF ALCHERINGIA** By Wayland Drew, Ballantine, May 1984, \$2.75, Part 1 of *The Erthing Cycle*, SF. An Alcheringian raiding party has become a war.

**THE DOOR INTO SHADOW**, Vol. 2 in the Epic Tales of the Five, by Diane Duane, Bluejay Books, Fantasy, April 1984, (c) 1983 & 84, \$7.95, 298 pp., Paperback. Of the many doors in the Goddess's world, the most terrible is the DOOR INTO SHADOW.

**MY ENEMY, MY ALLY** By Diane Duane, Pocket, July 1984, \$2.95. The new Star Trek novel... 'The Romulans kidnap Vulcans to genetically harness their mind power.'...

## E

**CASTLE OF WIZARDRY** By David Eddings, Book IV of the Belgariad, Fantasy, Ballantine, May 1984, \$3.50. Garion is a simple farm boy who discovers he is a sorcerer.

**SORCERER'S SON** By Phyllis Eisenstein, Ballantine, 4th printing 1982, fantasy, \$2.50, (c) 1979. A love story of enchantment and sorcery.

**STAR-ANCHORED, STAR-ANGERED** By Suzette Haden Elgin, DAW, May 1984, (c) 1979, \$2.50. Adventure of Coyote Jones, secret agent of the Tri-Galactic Intelligence.

**THE KREMLIN CORRECTION** by Jonathan Evans, TOR, July 1984, \$3.95. A suspense thriller about the collapse of the west by total collapse of the economic system.

## F

**THE RIDERS OF THE SIDHE** By Kenneth C. Flint, Bantam, June 1984, \$2.95. 'The greatest hero of Celtic Legend in a bold adventure of swordplay and enchantment.'

**THE FINAL REFLECTION** By John M. Ford Pocket, May 1984, \$2.95, *THE NEW STAR TREK NOVEL*. This story is told from the point of view of the Klingon commander, Krenn.

**THE FLIGHT OF THE DRAGONFLY** By Robert L. Forward, Timescape, 1984, \$7.95 trade paper; \$15.95 hardcover. 16 men and women explore beyond the confines of the solar system.

**DRAGON'S EGG** By Robert L. Forward, Ballantine, 2nd printing 1983, (c) 1980, \$2.95, SF. On a star world intelligent life, the cheela, evolve to the discovery of science.

**VOYAGE TO THE CITY OF THE DEAD** By Alan Dean Foster, Del Rey, Aug 1984, \$2.95, 256 pp., SF. The Redwells explore a planet which is home to three alien cultures.

**WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?** By Alan Dean Foster, Ballantine, June 1984, \$2.95. 12 stories, featuring SNAKE EYES, a Pip & Flinx adventure.

**THE I INSIDE** by Alan Dean Foster, Warner, July 1984, \$2.95. For over a hundred years Earth has been



ruled by a machine called the Coligatarch, but now a design engineer is rebelling.

## G

**FOLLOWER** By Stephen Gallagher, Sphere Books, Great Britain, 1984, £1.95. Out of Norse myth comes the Follower, half man and half wolf.

**A MATTER FOR MEN** By David Gerrold, Pocket, July 1984, (c) 1983, \$3.95. The War Against The Chortor, Book I. ...'He knows how to kill the alien creatures. Now he must survive his fellow human beings!'

**NEUROMANCER**, #3 in the New Ace SF Specials, by William Gibson, Edited by Terry Carr, July 1984, \$2.95. The story of Case, the interface cowboy who doublecrossed the wrong people.

**THE PRISONER OF BLACKWOOD CASTLE** By Ron Goulart, Avon, July 1984, \$2.50. Adventure involving a magician, a pretty reporter, a blood-sucking beauty and a wind-up werewolf.

**CHOSEN OF MIDA, JALAV, AMAZON WAR-RION, III**, By Sharon Green, DAW, Jan 1984, \$2.95. Jalav must form an alliance between the male-dominated cities and the wild women of the plains.

## H

**PLANET OF JUDGMENT** By Joe Haldeman, STAR TREK adventure, Bantam, (c) 1977, 4th printing June 1984, \$2.95. Trapped on a rogue planet where none of their equipment works.

**MASTER OF THE FIVE MAGICS** By Lyndon Hardy, Ballantine Fantasy, 5th printing March 1984, (c) 1980, \$2.95, 373 pp. ...'Alodar's quest is not only a stirring tale of adventure but also one of the most logical detailings of the laws of magic ever to appear in fantasy.'

**WEST OF EDEN** By Harry Harrison, Bantam, Aug 1984, \$15.95, hardcover. 483 pp. with detailed appendix. Harrison creates the geology, biology and culture and languages of this world which could have been the scientific history of our world.

**THE SEVENTH GATE SEVEN CITADELS: PART 4**, By Geraldine Harris, April 1984, Greenwillow Books, \$9.00, 256 pp., juvenile, ages 12+. Conclusion of the story of the 7 Citadels: the adventures of Kerish as he seeks the seventh key.

**JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE** By Robert A. Heinlein, Ballantine, Sept 1984, \$84 pp., \$16.95. A novel of pre-Armageddon where man is once again tested by God.

**WINNOWING STAR** By Richard Hilliard, The OZ Press, POB 33088, Seattle, WA, 98133, 1984, \$7.95, Paperback, 304 pp. 'The witnessing of a star, the spirit of the universe, has changed the lives of two people.'

**CODE OF THE LIFE MAKER** By James P. Hogan, Ballantine, June 1984, (c) 1983, \$2.95, 1st paper edition. ...'Hogan entertainingly takes on the age-old questions of philosophy -- such as what is man?'

**THE LAST CAT BOOK** By Robert E Howard, Illustrated by Peter Kuper, Dodd Mead, June 1984, 64 pp., \$5.95 Paperback, 6 X 9". If you rescue a kitten, shelter and pamper it, what will he give you in return?

**SISKIYOU** By Richard Hoyt, TOR, June 1984, (c) 1983, \$3.50. 'International intrigue and conspiracy set in Oregon, the Umpqua River.'

**BRIDGE OF BIRDS** By Barry Hughart St. Martin's Press, May 1984, hardcover, \$13.95, 248 pp. ...'BRIDGE OF BIRDS skillfully mingles fantasy and folklore with the customs and social history of ancient China.'

## I

**THE BEST OF TREK #7**, from the magazine for Star Trek fans, Ed. by Walter Irwin & G.B. Love, Signet, June 1984, \$2.75. ...'From warp drive to genesis...the journey continues into new realms of Trek.'

## J

**STEVE JACKSON'S SORCERY I, THE SHAMUTANTI HILLS**, Penguin Books, 1984, (c) 1983, Fantasy gamebook, UK £1.95. In this fantasy role-playing you may elect to become a warrior or a wizard. The spells to give you power are found in the **SORCERY SPELL BOOK** by the same author, Penguin, UK £1.75.

**THE WARLOCK OF FIRETOP MOUNTAIN**, By Steve Jackson & Ian Livingstone, (c) 1982, £1.95, Laurel-leaf Books. A gamebook where you are the hero.

**ARCHER'S GOON** By Diana Wynne Jones, Greenwillow Books, April 1984, 192 pp., \$10.00, Juvenile: 12+, SF. ...'The Sykes family become pawns in the wizards' fight to win their freedom, ...'

## K

**MUTE EVIDENCE** By Daniel Kagan & Ian Summers, Bantam, July 1984, \$4.95, \$28 pp. An investigation of the epidemic of cattle mutilations in the U.S. from 1969-1979.

**STAR-SEARCH**, Cageworld #4, by Colin Kapp, DAW, July 1984, (c) 1983, \$2.50. Planetary shells have been built, each succeeding the other, each populated by men who have never seen the stars.

**TSUNAMI** By Crawford Kilian, Bantam, July 1984, 224pp., \$3.50. Solar flares trigger catastrophe; tidal waves menace the west coast.

**THE CLARION AWARDS** Ed. by Damon Knight, Doubleday, July 1984, \$11.95, 177 pp. '14 original stories by the future stars of science fiction.'

**THE GOLDEN GROVE** By Nancy Kress, Bluejay Books, Inc., Trade hardcover, \$13.95, March 1984. The silk-weaving spiders in the Golden Grove are weaving defective webs; the spider stone may give up the answer.

**BASILISK** Edited by Ellen Kushner Ace Fantasy, 1984, (c) 1980, \$2.50, 11 stories...of timeless fantasy, ...shape-shifting...wizardry... perilous bargains'...

## L

**THE RING OF TRUTH** By David J. Lake DAW, June 1984, \$2.95. Exploring in different universes where there may be different natural laws.

**THE SHAPE CHANGER** By Keith Laumer, Ace SF, 1984, (c) 1972, \$2.75. The 3rd adventure of Lafayette O'Leary, in which he discovers a troublesome double.

**ONCE THERE WAS A GIANT** By Keith Laumer, TOR, July 1984, \$2.50. Baird Ulrik is an assassin who has been framed for a crime he did not commit.

**A VISION OF BEASTS, BOOK I, CREATION DESCENDING**, By Jack Lovejoy, TOR, July 1984, \$2.95. Technology is dead and men struggle against fear and ignorance centuries after the Cataclysm.

## M

**THE ALIEN TRACE** By H.M. Major, Signet, July 1984, \$2.95. ...'Only a gifted empath like Cord could track the menace from the stars but could he keep it from destroying his world?'

**JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARDS VOL. #5**  
 Edited by George R.R. Martin, Blue-  
 Jay Books Inc., 1984, 238 pp.,  
 \$7.95. Short novel by award-win-  
 ner C.J. Cherryh + novelettes by  
 nominees Jack L. Chalker, M.A. Fos-  
 ter and Carter Scholz.

**EXILE ON VLAHIL** By Ardath Mayhar,  
 Doubleday, May 1984, \$11.95.  
 Fantasy. Ila Fazio is exiled to  
 the unexplored planet, Vlahil.

**LOADS OF THE TRIPLE MOONS** By Ardath  
 Mayhar, Ace SF, 1984, (c) 1983,  
 \$2.50. The protective Old  
 Lords are gone; left are two small  
 children who are too young to have  
 learned the powers.

**THE BYTES BROTHERS #1 and #2.**  
 By Lois & Floyd McCoy, Bantam, 110  
 pp. each, \$2.25 each, June 1984.  
 Two Solve-It-Yourself Computer  
 Mysteries for sleuths of ages 10+.  
 For kids with or without computers.

**FLIGHT OF HONOR** By Richard S.  
 McEnroe, Bantam, July 1984, \$2.50.  
 The struggle to control the stars  
 in a novel of the future.

**BLANK SLATE** By Mark J. McGarry,  
 Signet, May 1984, \$2.95. 'Would  
 the people of Earth's long-lost col-  
 ony relay welcome recontact -- or  
 seek vengeance?...'

**STAR TREK III, THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK**  
 By Vonda N. McIntyre, based on a  
 screenplay by Harve Bennett, Pock-  
 et, June 1984, SF, \$2.95. (Para-  
 mount Pictures space adventure.)

**THE HELIX AND THE SWORD** By John  
 McLoughlin, TOR, 1st paper pub.,  
 July 1984, (c) 1983, \$2.95.  
 "Entertaining SF parable...Rich  
 in inventive zoological ideas and  
 tongue-in-cheek extrapolation."  
 -- Kirkus Reviews

**FRANK HERBERT'S MASTERPIECE OF THE  
 IMAGINATION, THE DUNE ENCYCLOPEDIA**  
 Compiled by Dr. Willis E. McNelly,  
 Berkley, June 1984, Trade paperbk,  
 \$9.95. 'Eight years in the making,  
 the work of painstaking scholarship  
 and research, containing thousands  
 of entries and cross-references...'

**WAR OF THE MOONRHYMES** By Calvin  
 Miller, Vol. III in the Singreale  
 Chronicles, Harper & Row, 1984,  
 \$7.95. Literature/fantasy.  
 Velissa and Raccaman Daktare  
 return to their war-devastated  
 homeland.



## N

**SIX OF SWORDS** By Carole Nelson  
 Douglas, Ballantine, 1984, (c) 1982  
 \$2.95, Fantasy. ... 'Sorceress and  
 swordsman, they were thrown together  
 ...but only by combining her uncer-  
 tain powers with his remaining skills  
 could they survive.'...

**MORE MAGIC**, Ed. by Larry Niven,  
 Ace, June 1984, \$5.95. 197 pp.,  
 4 stories of magic and fantasy,  
 including a novella by Niven.

**STAR GUARD** by Andre Norton, Ballan-  
 tine, July 1984, (c) 1955, \$2.25.  
 Kana had fought for pay, then had  
 to fight for freedom.

**THE X FACTOR** By Andre Norton  
 Ballantine, 1984, (c) 1965, \$2.50  
 'He turned his back on his past --  
 and found a new life in a dead  
 city.'

**HIGH SORCERY** By Andre Norton,  
 Ace Fantasy, 7th printing May 1984,  
 (c) 1970, \$2.50. Five stories,  
 two of which were published in IF  
 in 1967 and 1969.

**DREAD COMPANION** By Andre Norton,  
 Ballantine, May 1984, (c) 1970,  
 SF adventure, \$2.50. Influenced  
 by magic, lost in another dimen-  
 sion and time.

## O

**CORMAC MAC ART: THE SWORD OF THE  
 GAEL**, Robert E. Howard's Other  
 Great Hero, #5, by Andrew J. Offutt,  
 Ace Fantasy, 3rd printing May 1984,  
 (c) 1975, \$2.50. 'Sword and  
 Sorcery in the tradition of Robert  
 Howard's Conan!'

## P

**THE DARKANGEL** By Meredith Ann Pierce  
 TOR, July 1984, (c) 1982, \$2.95.  
 Fantasy. Ariel must destroy the  
 vampire, compellingly handsome but  
 evil and cold, to free the wraiths.

**FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE** By H. Beam  
 Piper, Ace, Aug 1984, \$2.95, 224 pp.,  
 3rd & final novel of Piper's, lost  
 for 20 years after Piper's death.  
 Fuzzies were two-foot-tall golden-  
 furred bipeds, five-fingered hands,  
 stereoscopic vision, able to com-  
 municate ultrasonically.

**DEMON IN THE SKULL** By Frederik Pohl  
 DAW, July 1984, \$2.50, a revision  
 of A PLAGUE OF PYTHONs. Demonic  
 possession causes worldwide vicious  
 and senseless crimes.

**HEECHEE RENDEZVOUS** By Frederik  
 Pohl, Ballantine, May 1984, \$14.95  
 Finale of the epic adventure which  
 began in GATEWAY, and continued in  
 BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON.  
 Robinette Broadhead makes another  
 voyage into space where the Heechee  
 are waiting.

**SKYWALKING** By Dale Pollock, Ballan-  
 tine, May 1984, (c) 1983, \$3.50  
 'The life and films of George Lu-  
 cas, the creator of STAR WARS.'

**PARALLEL MAN** By Richard Purtill,  
 DAW, July 1984, \$2.50. 'A science  
 fiction novel of dragons and demons  
 and other worlds.'

## R

**CAST A COLD EYE** By Alan Ryan, TOR,  
 July 1984, \$3.95. A novel of the  
 western coast of Ireland where old  
 customs and fears still exist. In  
 researching the Irish famine, a  
 greater present evil is discovered.

## S

**PHU NHAM** By Barry Sadler, TOR, June  
 1984, \$3.50. An American sniper  
 roams the Vietnam jungles to kill  
 off the Vietcong.

**ANALOG: WRITERS' CHOICE, VOL II**,  
 Ed. by Stanley Schmidt, Doubleday,  
 July 1984, \$12.95, 285 pp. Eleven  
 stories; the authors of stories in  
 ANALOG/ASTOUNDING chose their fa-  
 vorites and explain why.

**THE SHOEMAKER, THE ANATOMY OF A  
 PSYCHOTIC**, By Flora Rheta Schreiber,  
 Signet, April 1984, (c) 1983-84,  
 \$3.95, 395 pp. The true story of  
 Joseph Kallinger... 'a split person-  
 ality and his horrifying secret  
 life of rape and murder.'...

**I, VAMPIRE** By Jody Scott, Ace SF,  
 May 1984, \$2.50. Sterling O'Bliv-  
 ion was a misunderstood vampire,  
 who fell in with aliens who could  
 take any form they chose.

**THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS**  
 By Charles Sheffield, Ace SF,  
 3rd printing May 1984, (c) 1979,  
 \$2.50. ... 'Fantasy? The concept  
 has been in literature of physics  
 for nearly two decades'... 'a shimmer-  
 ing bridge between earth and  
 space'...

**IS THAT WHAT PEOPLE DO? THE SELECT-  
 ED STORIES OF ROBERT SHECKLEY**, Holt,  
 Rinehart & Winston, Aug 1984,  
 \$19.95, 402 pp. A collection of  
 works from 3 decades of this comic  
 SF writer.

**WORLD OF A THOUSAND COLORS** By Robert Silverberg, Bantam, Aug 1984, (c) 1982, \$2.95. Nineteen stories dating from the SF magazine era, the Fifties, the most recent written in 1971.

**TOM PAINE MARY** By L. Neil Smith, Del Rey, 288 pp., \$2.75, Aug 1984. ...'novel of politics, boondoggles, space adventure and deadly encounters with aliens'...

**THE STARS ARE THE STYX** By Theodore Sturgeon, Bluejay Books Special Edition, 1984, (c) 1979, 382 pp., \$6.95. Speculative SF, a collection of stories from GALAXY.

**MALLWORLD** by Somtow Sucharitkul TOR, 1984, (c) 1981, \$2.95.

The planet-sized shopping center where one can play human pinball or experience the suicide parlors.

## T

**THE REVENANTS** By Sheri S. Tepper Ace Fantasy, May 1984, \$2.95.

About endless quests and riddles with no answers.

**CONSCIENCE PLACE** By Joyce Thompson, Doubleday, May 1984, \$13.95.

... 'a haunting, splendidly imagined world--the unique world of the nuclear accident victims.'

**THE MONSTERS AND THE CRITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS** By J.R.R. Tolkien, Ed. by Christopher Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984, (c) 1983, \$15.95

Discussions of the Middle English classics, essays on fairy tales and on creating new languages.

**ICE & IRON** By Wilson Tucker, Ballantine, July 1984, (c) 1974, 1975, \$2.50. ...'Naked primitives were dropping to Earth from a savage past still in the future...'

## V

**LYONESSE** By Jack Vance, Berkley, 1984, (c) 1983, \$3.50, fantasy.

Set in the Elder Isles now sunk beneath the Atlantic.

**THE BOOK OF PTATH** By A.E. Van Vogt, DAW, 1984, (c) 1974, \$2.50.

The great god Ptath has been exiled into the world of two hundred million A.D., in mortal form.

**DRAGONALES #2, RUNESWORLD**, By Rhonda Vilotti, Signet, July 1984, #1.95; & **DRAGONALES #1, SHARD DAUGHTER'S GUEST**, Signet, \$1.95. 'It's up to you to make the choices and explore the many roads to magical adventure!'

## W

**SUNSTROKE AND OTHER STORIES** By Ian Watson, July 1984, \$14.95, Victor Gollancz, (c) 1982, 190 pp.

... 'drawing inspiration from an immense variety of scientific, political and philosophical ideas'...

**THE CHROMOSOMAL CODE** By Lawrence Watt-Evans, Avon, May 1984, \$2.50.

'In a galactic war for control of the future, planet Earth and its people serve only one purpose'...

**FUTURETRACK 5** By Robert Westall, Greenwillow Books, 256 pp., April 1984, \$10.50, Ages 12+.

The story of a young computer-wizard in the future-world of Britain in the 21st Century.

**THE SONG OF THE AXE** by Paul O. Williams, Ballantine, July 1984, \$2.95, Book 6 of the Pelbar Cycle.

Tor, last of the Shumai Axemen, teaches his nephew Tristal the Way of the Axeman.

**PLAN(E)T ENGINEERING** By Gene Wolfe, New England Science Fiction Association, Inc., (Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139), Hardcover, 1984, \$15.00 + \$1 postage; long-life paper, hi-quality binding; 1,000 copies Ltd Ed. Stories, essays and poems by Gene Wolfe, published by Boskone XXI as Guest of Honor.

**THE 1984 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF** Ed. By Donald A. Wollheim, DAW, June 1984, \$2.95. 10 stories, novelettes and novellas.

## Y

**NOMADS** By Chelsea Quinn Yarbro Bantam, May 1984, \$2.95

A doctor's life is threatened by ancient wanderers, soul kidnappers.

## ADDENDA

**CONAN THE DESTROYER** By Robert Jordan TOR, July 1984, 1st publication, \$2.95, now a major motion picture.

The sultry princess Tamaris hires Conan to recover the gem called the Heart of Ahriman.

**THE CREATURE FEATURES MOVIE GUIDE** By John Stanley, Warner Bks, June 1984, (c) 1981/84, \$7.95, 304 pp.

Reviews of over 3,000 movies with photos, noted quotes with illos.

## PROZINE

**AMAZING** July, 1984, \$1.75 Edited by George Scithers.

No longer categorizing the fiction by length. Stories by Darrell Schweitzer, Kevin O'Donnell, Jr., Grendel Briarton, Robert Adams, David Langford, Robert Morrell, Jr., J.O. Jeppson, F. Gwynplaine McIntyre, J.A. Lawrence.

Opinion by Robert Silverberg. Also book reviews, cartoons, letters, poetry, an editorial.

An interview with Roger Zelazny.

**AMAZING** September, 1984, \$1.75 Edited by George Scithers

Stories by Somtow Sucharitkul, Wei Yahua, Greg Cox, Lisa Tuttle, Gardner Dozois, Avram Davidson, Gerald Pierce.

Opinion by Robert Silverberg. Also, book reviews, letters, cartoon, poetry, an editorial.

Article: Science fiction in China by William F. Wu.





# LETTERS

# LETTER FROM IAN COVELL  
2 Copgrove Close, Berwick Hills  
Middlesbrough, Cleveland,  
England TS3 7BP  
June 17, 1984

'Another good issue -- but then, there never really has been one totally without merit. #51, even missing the bit by Avram Davidson, was very good. Especially the totally unexpected "Bushel" column by Shaw; this might be a good start to getting his name known enough in fan and near-fan circles so that his books sell as well as they should rather than as seldom as they do ..

'(I'm not political, except in despising extremists like our prime mistress, but I was intrigued by a TV debate the other night in which the panel of "celebrities" was asked, "What is the definition of fascist in the 1980s?" Several listed the attributes of fascism as they saw it (central control; one-party state; about 3 others) and the questioner gleefully pointed out all their definitions applied to our current Labour -- socialist -- party -- (nationalise all industry, etc.). So, he smirked, the new fascists were the socialists. (We also had a TV debate on the "spiralling debts of debtor nations whose reneging on contracts -- because of increased interest rates upping what they owe -- could collapse the entire

world banking system ... First time I'd ever followed the argument.)

Your reviews of THE HUNGER and MIKE HAMMER may need a slight adjustment (if I am right). The seduction scene in the first was cut to pacify censors and so may appear (now) contrived, where once it made sense (and was in the book) ... and of course MIKE HAMMER is a parody of the genre and of the original books, that's why -- apart from its body-count of dead women -- it works; US TV has enough might-kaiser-right ("fascist," says I) programs in T.J. HOOKER and BLUE THUNDER.

((You have me at a disadvantage in re T.J. HOOKER and BLUE THUNDER; I've watched each only once. If you must view everything through fascist/non-fascist glasses, at least admit that HOOKER is a cop with compassion and Liberal soul. The producers are trying to 'take the curse' off action programming with a model policeman as the protagonist. Hooker the cop is probably more concerned with due process, freedom and human rights than most of the people he saves/helps. But let it go. The world on TV has no relationship to the real world, and arguing from it, pro or con, is ridiculous.))

I can only sympathize with F. Paul Wilson's view of the movie of his book and murmur sadly that in one or two fanzines I have already, without seeing it, said it would be dreadful. The reason is an interview with the director in which he said calmly he was going to excise most of the vampire plot because it was silly, and turn the book into a philosophical exercise on evil. Since the book is excellent as it is, the vampire legend an integral and scary part, to change the flow of the plot presaged disaster. What also made the book different from most modern horror was its dual ending of the total demolition of evil and the redemption of its tortured and strange hero. Now, even that, says Wilson's review, is gone, and with it both the hero and his romance.

((I believe THE KEEP will be on Showtime in August, and of course I'll see it and have a comment at two.))

'Speaking of deformation/defamation of character, having just seen GREYSTOKE, I should like to reiterate that ERB's estate may just be the worst legacy ever left by an author. This film, full of pain and distress, madness, explicit brutality and death, and an ending totally opposed to the original Tarzan books gets backing and agree-

ment from the estate, the Dereks' TARZAN, accurate to the spirit of the books, romantic, sensual, dreamy, loud and innocent, with a modicum of violence, gets dragged through the courts. I find it incomprehensible that the newer one, complete with extra-marital sex (! A definite no-no throughout ERB's work) and a Tarzan who isn't even likeable, should get their backing. ... But then I never understood how Eklund got to ruin the LORD TEDRIC series by Doc Smith.

'Kingsbury: Referring onward to my published letter, the paperback of COURTSHIP RITE doesn't include -- or does it -- the portrait of him on its cover. ... By the way, the book has been appallingly retitled GETA in English paperback. Yeuch.

'Agin Platt writes an interesting article. I'd like to comment again on his first article (Make-Your-Own-Adventure books) that all of its points are applicable to that other increasingly popular mass delight, the soap opera. The only logic in these farragos is that applied externally, there is no internal development in that sense; the relationships may alter but neither the characters nor their set personae alter in the slightest. What motivates the shows is fashion, censorship, the real life of the actors, the waxing and waning popularity, and so on. Nothing grows or changes, which is why you can tune in after months and only notice that A is sleeping with B where he'd used to sleep with C. (There is a marvelous example of this outside logic in DALLAS; in series #1, the only one I watched, Lucy was sleeping with Ray, by series 3 or 4, Ray was her blood uncle and series 1 was thus about incest. Nobody has ever referred to that relationship since because it no longer matters. The only concern is now. (Another thought I had was that Pier's Anthony's seirs series is so popular because it is essentially a role-playing game, where each "character" has certain powers/attributes and is given a series of tests to overcome, pass or fail, using those attributes. Wouldn't take much to make a boardgame. (They have to find a new way into the wizard's palace every time and pay a forfeit when they get in.)

'Damon Knight's explication of THE MAN IN THE TREE raises an interesting point. I like books that take religion to its ultimate to show how stupid and dangerous it is. (BLACK EASTER, WARHOUND AND THE WORLD'S PAIN), and books that explore religious myth and try to resolve it to "reality" (HOLY BLOOD AND HOLY GRAIL), but Knight, for obvious reasons, has decided to write it sympathetically and with full character -- and somehow I do not want to read a whole book about someone I dislike (a Christ-clone). There are only so many hours in a day; and my criteria for choosing what to read is getting very strict, not always in ways I approve. (I wonder if DK has read HOLY BLOOD, by the way, all his arguments are given at greater length and with greater depth -- he had less space -- in it.)

'Speaking of William Goldman. I don't like his fiction because I disagree with his philosophy of life, but I read ADVENTURES IN THE SCREEN TRADE and was struck by what seems to be a fundamental misinterpretation of certain things. Wrapped up in the thesis of superstar-as-egocentric, Goldman says that no superstar will play a son-of-a-bitch (no redemptive features), and makes this seem abnormal in some manner -- I'd have thought it obvious that nobody likes to emulate or portray someone who isn't likeable in some way. The more blatant misinterpretation is his view of why THE GREAT WALDO PEPPER infuriated and alienated audiences; Goldman's version is that when Pepper's lover dies, it is Redford who failed and the audience didn't like or believe Redford could fail. Crap. People disliked the sudden switch to outrageous tragedy after what seemed a fairly usual romantic romp -- of course the story included mention of danger and death, but so what? These were likeable people and top-billed ... and they were in love ... so when he reaches for her, of course he's going to save her. But no, the great Waldo Goldman says she shall die -- and it's that the audience refused to believe. Her death was unnecessary and inappropriate and wrong. My point is that Goldman believes what he is saying, but Goldman is wrong, overly concerned with the public personae of stars, that is my reaction to his





other theses and views of fiction in his fiction and films, I don't believe them either...



'Bob Shaw is right (P. 36) about car number plates and lack of freedom/fun in the UK. He fails to mention that while we were using the system of dating registrations by putting a letter of the alphabet after the number (e.g., ABC 123F, DEF 456H) the government/licensing centre specifically banned the use of certain letters (especially X) in case anyone had the chance to use an 'offensive' or "questionable" number. This amazing piece of law/regulation could not be fought and so whatever fun there might have been (and the papers were gleefully awaiting some funny numbers) vanished before it could begin. English moral law: If it's going to be fun, ban it.

'(P. 38: LOVE SONG. 500 copies @ \$40 each = \$20,000. Minor novel? I WANT ONE!!)

'I would be more amused by Steve Perry's letter (starting as it does with "up your arse, Platt!") if he didn't make the illogical point that people make a choice between CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE and THE BRADY BUNCH. I suspect they do both, and how's that for a vision of a nightmare future? Children -- in my experience -- don't pick either a book or a TV program, each has its proper time, and inclination. Perry is a nut. CHOOSE books are elongated games of battleships/whatever; they don't lead anyone -- by themselves -- to read fiction of any kind; I'd be interested to know if the children who use these books care about details like it being S&S/war/SF/whatever .. or whether the internal game itself is the thing ... I say it is. (I agree with you about Platt. He has been towards me exactly as he's been towards you, and I fail to understand the hostility of, e.g., Schweitzer. I don't care, mind you, except it may harm sales/reviews of Platt's books, but I also don't understand.)

'I'm pleased but puzzled, that you list Westlake's massive KAHANA in the Archives. The only fantasy it has is the central madness of A-min. A powerful, upsetting work, it is one of those strange-historied books. Although the UK was intimately involved, this book has still found no UK publisher after several years. I think I know why, but I'm hoping I'm wrong. (I wonder if Herbert Kastle's name-the-new-Nazis

book, DAVID'S WAR, has found a publisher in your country? Appeared in mine, but was having much trouble in the US despite Kastle's bestseller status.) End quickly.

((I generally put everything sent by pro publishers in the Archives. It's all arbitrary, though I draw the line at the pasta cookbook Ballantine sent recently, by mistake I assume.))

'Great mag, useful and interesting, well produced, illoes. Luck to you and Paulette.'

# LETTER FROM PHILIP JOSE' FARMER  
1617 N. Fairmont Dr.  
Peoria, IL 61614  
May 1, 1984

'Dear Dick (no pun intended):

'Charles Platt's "The Decline of Fiction" (SFR #51) bolsters my opinion, belief, or what-have-you that nonfiction is indeed more important and remunerative than fiction. The trend will swell (but not, like an excited penis, shrink after discharge). So, I'm working now on JERRY FALWELL AND ANAL SEX AND DON'T KNOCK HYPOCRISY. Two surefire nonfiction best sellers.

'Actually, I have been thinking about writing a book re my experiences as a technical writer for a secret project conducted by the defense industry. It would be both autobiographical and factual. Tentative title: UNCLE SAM'S MAD TEA PARTY. A friend who is also a lawyer advised me not to write it. He said I'd have the FBI on me and that I could then write a factual book about my prison experiences. However, the project was so secret and confusing and so long ago (1969) and in the end, so ridiculous that I doubt that the U.S. government would even admit that there had been such a project. Still ...

((You could always write an article on the matter for SFR. No one in government reads SFR that I know of. Go on...you can tell us!))

# LETTER FROM DAVID CRECK  
1143 Cherokee Rd, #7  
Louisville, KY 40204  
May, 1984

'Charles Platt's column on "The Decline of Fiction" raised "an unresolved, open question" on the popularity of non-fiction as oppos-

ed to fiction. There is also the problem of effectively promoting fiction. Journalists, he said, "seldom seem able to find a workable angle."

'I've worked in local television news for almost eight years. One of the problems for a journalist doing an interview with Charles Platt the SF writer is that he's probably never heard of Charles Platt, or indeed, any SF writer other than Clarke, Bradbury, Asimov, etc. If he's heard of them, he still probably hasn't read them. It is, after all, non-fiction which by definition the journalist's training and craft has emphasized.

'The average viewer (or reader, this applies to print journalism as well) has also never heard of Charles Platt. Why should he read his book?

'The writer of non-fiction has an advantage here -- some of the ideas from his book can be presented to the viewer verbatim. The "sense" of the book can be presented in the course of the interview, much in the way cover blurbs attempt to do, but (let's hope) more accurately and sincerely.

'Try to do the same with fiction. First of all, you don't want to tell too much about your book. That's part of the fun of reading fiction, finding out what happens next. Perhaps Benford's AGAINST INFINITY does explore our use of technology to "capture, conquer and destroy" the unknown, but the exploration is simply not as effective in summary as in the reading. Benford, like any good author, is not just making an objective observation. He's showing us the emotions that bring about the use of technology in such a manner.

'In other words, non-fiction simply lends itself to summary more than fiction.

'Unlike Platt, I read several SF magazines regularly. Like him, I find myself turning to the departments first. My personal explanation for this is that I have a higher expectation of the departments being satisfying. I admit this may be due to the fact that I spend so much time in the course of my job dealing with non-fiction. I assimilate it easier and without regard to whatever my mood may be at the time. With fiction, however, sometimes I'm not in the mood to read fiction in general or the particular type of story that finds itself before me. There are days I dote on Heinlein and don't consider picking up an Ellison, other days I crave Silverberg and reject the idea of "Doc" Smith.

'Like Platt, I'm not sure if this is good or bad. I only know

that I've read both of his "Dream Makers" books, and would read more pages of them in a single day than of most fiction I've read -- simply because I found them more interesting than most fiction I've come across lately.

'There will no doubt be as many different reactions to Platt's "open question" as there are readers. Perhaps part of his question will eventually be resolved, or at least made more concrete.'

((Heavy readers of fiction get saturated with the usual fiction structures, formulas, scenes, characters, dialog...and in contrast non-fiction is about real people, real things, real happenings. It did not used to be true that people had the time and money to read all the fiction they want. In addition we have an unending diet of TV and movie fiction to feed our make-believe story needs.

((A fiction writer must become a personality to be on TV talk shows either because of wealth, bizarre doings in private life, or because he is personally a great TV personality/talker.

((I think people read a lot (or a little, or not at all) from deep character pressures plus intelligence factors. And family environment. You don't read much if mom and dad don't read, and if the house rocks day and night to soap operas, TV, and loud/deafening music. Or if the only reading material in the house are a scattering of comic books.))

#### # LETTER FROM JERRY POURNELLE

c/o BYTE  
POB 372  
Hancock, NH 03449  
May 1, 1984

'Re Karl Edd's review (unquestioning acceptance) of Kaplan's WIZARDS OF ARMAGEDDON: It would help to have a reviewer who knows a little about the subject of a non-fiction book.

'Clearly Edd has never studied the situation, & thus accepts parodies as realities. He's so grossly wrong that it's ludicrous.

'Random item: Kahn didn't "propose" a doomsday machine; it was a thought experiment carrying the Assured Destruction doctrine as far as it would go. Etc.'



# CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
April 29, 1984

'Lots of things in the current issue are calculated to ring my chimes, but F. Paul Wilson's account of the filming of THE KEEP set off more bells than Quasimodo. If it's any consolation to him---which I doubt---he can rest (or whittle) assured that the same thing very frequently happens to writers of original screenplays, or even adapters. Wiser heads---producers, directors, actors, janitors, call-girls, relatives, and just plain heads who sit around snorting coke before they "take a meeting"---all join in offering improvements. All I can say to Mr. Wilson is, welcome to the club!'

((The only alternative is to become powerful enough to be like George Lucas and control everything in your films and make sure bone-heads don't screw up your words and vision.))

# LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, PA  
19087 May 25, 1984

'Re: Doug Fratz's letter in SFR #51. I got a worse example than the two teachers who didn't know that the stars were suns. They, at least one hopes, were not science teachers. This was not their specialty. Many ignorami never devote a single synapse to anything beyond their specialty or what leads to immediate gratification.

'But at the 1973 Clarion Workshop we had a curious incident. Ben Bova had recently arrived and was sitting around with a bunch of people discussing black holes and other recently discovered/hypothesized bits of astrophysics, when suddenly a woman (one of the writing students) said, "Wait a minute, Ben. What's the difference between a star and a planet?"'

'Bova was, to say the least, taken aback. After a very pregnant pause he recovered and said, "Well, a star is gaseous and burning like the sun and a planet is hard and rocky like the one you're on now."

'Fascinating that such a person was at a science fiction writing workshop, but it turned out, she was more interested in writing for little magazines and seemed to have something between a contempt for and an incomprehension of such science-fictional virtues as logical consistency. She also seemed

proud of her ignorance of science fiction. I don't believe she's ever published anything. Surprise.

'I think the general public believes that scientists are making it all up, that everything in science is "just a theory." (Whenever the phrase is used, you know the speaker doesn't know what a theory is.) But, a vast number of diseases have been eliminated, and far fewer women die in childbirth because of the "germ theory." And through my telescope I have seen that Venus has phases and the visible outer planets do not, a fact which can only be accounted for by the "heliocentric theory." I have also seen the shadow of the Earth on the Moon, which is accounted for by the "round Earth theory." But I am sure that many people think that these things are made up, or that it is a matter of "naive faith."

'The two cultures are indeed divided between the rational and the irrational. The non-thinking, Creationist/Faith Healer/Occultist type is merely a creature of instinct, led around by emotional needs and sense gratifications the same way a dog is led around by its nose.

'By the way, I understand that one of the Moral Majority's new priorities is "the menace of home computers." This is actually heartening. It's nice to watch them waste their energy fighting an industry that large and that powerful.'

((I wouldn't be too superior were I you, Darrell; the so-called 'rationalists' are ruled by instinct and emotions, too, though perhaps not to quite the extent as the 'irrationalists'.

((Many of the most successful religious leaders (like Fallwell)) use computer technology to further their "crusades". And since the Bible is being put into a computer database, the time may come when the faithful will be urged to have a home computer with modem to "tune in" to the newest Bible study link.))

# LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT  
2350 Virginia  
Troy, MI 48063  
June 6, 1984

'Damon Knight took deadly aim with his cap pistol when he said: "...this right-wing bias is a grave defect in the works of many hard SF writers, because they are philosophically shallow." I cannot perceive much philosophical depth in

this transparent example of ideological bigotry. It is evident that Knight has never honestly come to grips with the viewpoint of the "right-wing" "Campbellite" writers he so cavalierly dismisses as philosophically shallow. If he had ever honestly considered it, he would not misrepresent it so grossly and absurdly as he did when he went on to say: "The only thing we learn from these works is that Man has a glorious destiny to conquer the universe and that if other races get in the way it is too bad."

"John W. Campbell may have thought something like this, but which "Campbellite" writers does Knight accuse of holding this position? Campbell believed in dianetics too -- would Knight impute this belief to all the writers he calls "Campbellite?"

"As I see it, one of the primary concerns of so-called "right-wing" SF writers is the reality of good and evil, especially as seen in SF type contexts. I would guess that this seems philosophically shallow to Knight because he does not want to believe in the existence of good and evil -- a failing peculiar to many self-styled "liberals." H. Beam Piper frequently made liberals the villains of his stories, and showed that denying the existence of good and evil is utter foolishness, and people who persist in this denial inevitably cause great mischief through their misapprehension of the way things really are.

"I think there is genuine value in what writers such as Piper have to say. As I write this, it is the fortieth anniversary of the D-Day Allied landing on the beaches of Normandy, and this brings to mind what must honestly be termed the shameful reluctance of the liberals of that generation to recognize that German Nazism was truly a manifestation of evil. If the Japanese had not bombed Pearl Harbor, the liberals in this country might never have consented to America joining in the effort to defeat Hitler and his minions. For that matter, it was the liberals in Britain who allowed Hitler to grow so powerful by following a policy of appeasement. Those people (such as Churchill) who recognized that this was a stupid policy and warned against it were disparaged by self-righteous liberals as philosophically shallow, and accused of being warmongers.

"But of course, all this is truth that Knight will not be able to accept if there is no room in his philosophy for such cosmic concepts as good and evil. I understand the emotional appeal of the

liberal viewpoint. It is a cozy, comforting, little ideology, for if you deny the existence of good and evil, then you can pretend you are free of any real moral responsibility and never have to feel guilty. The Neville Chamberlains of the world can just blink and forget that the appeasement of Hitler ever took place, and liberals today can feign amazement when some irresponsible, foolish action of theirs has disastrous consequences.

"If Knight wishes to inquire what I mean by "good" and "evil," I suggest he reread the works of SF writers he dismisses as "right-wing" because the nature of good and evil is part of what they write about. Some attempt to define it in purely mechanistic terms; cause and effect. Some see it as variant types of human behavior. Some view it in terms of what is in harmony/disharmony with the nature and needs of all sapient life. Some explore the possible metaphysical ramifications. The inclusion of alien races and unfamiliar technologies adds further depth to these contemplations.

"I pity Knight for having missed all of this."

((Tsk tsk. How nice to have such superiority of mind and morals to be able to 'pity' the ignorant and misguided Damon Knight. That little remark let a couple of cats out of your character bag I don't think you intended.

((When the metaphysical reality of Good and Evil come into a discussion, I quail; seems those two opposites have roots in Heaven and Hell, and thus in God and the Devil, and then... then into how He and It influence people right here in River City all the time. "God spoke to me last night" and "The devil made me do it".

((COP OUT! say I. Selfish, self-serving use of religious concepts, say I. (As when a couple of religious persuasion divorce and each claims the other is "demon possessed" and Evil...)

((I believe our basic moral standards are bedded in our instincts and that those deep structures (and our body shapes, mechanics, and our planet) determine our societies and our character. Self-consciousness adds a wildcard and our ego is easily warped by untamed solipsism in various degree. We are a stew of drives, lusts, needs of various kinds, often in mortal conflict, and to make some sense of all this we tend to personify those inner forces.

((How's that for a nutshell human cosmology?))

# LETTER FROM STEVEN GRANT  
127 W. 78th St., Basement  
New York, NY 10024  
May 14, 1984

"I don't read science fiction much anymore, but God! I love this magazine. Controversy, controversy, controversy. I'm starting to wonder about you a little, though; you LIKE Legmen?"

"I wish I could get involved in the Charles Platt/interactive books noise that littered #51's letterpages. Last year, I was hired by a book packager here to develop a science fiction interactive series that will be coming out from Dell (good sense and contractual obligations prevent me from naming it) in a few months. Figuring out the structure of the things was fascinating -- took me a couple of well-paid pains -- but writing them was a royal pain. They are "books" without plot (every time you get to something interesting, you have to spin it off into two frequently unrelated plots to keep the books from getting repetitious), character (the reader is the hero of the book, and brings to it his/her own persona, and other characters flit in and out too rapidly -- avoiding repetition again -- to make much of a dent), or theme (since things must diverge, no possibility stands out as an important one). Pays good though, for what amounts to a short story, once you've mastered the form.

"I'm not sure I agree with you and Steve Perry and your "reading anything is good" argument, which I hear a lot from comic book professionals. Is reading anything good when what you read is comic books that teach you that the correct way to deal with any situation is to get mad and haul off and hit somebody? If someone reads only MEIN KAMPF (say, over and over and over again), would you say it's good that he's reading anything? If someone reads science fiction exclusively, so much so that he interprets his whole experience through it to the point of believing that all pacifists should be forced to read STARSHIP TROOPERS to see the error of their ways (I know someone who said this), is that good? I don't see reading as a necessarily good thing, when it only leads the reader back to point zero instead of ushering them on to other ideas and perspectives. It may keep the skill from withering, to some extent, but I think we have to differentiate between reading as a motor function and reading as an intellectual pursuit. The two don't necessarily walk hand in hand."

((The belief is that no one reads only sf or comics or even the Bible. Reading inevitably leads to

reading in other areas as curiosity is created and awareness of vast other reading areas comes. Reading, too, is an advantage to a person, and opens up avenues of knowledge and power. Reading for greed's sake will lead to reading for diversion's sake. There is a vast menu of reading in existence in America now, and you can pick and choose as your mental palate desires.))

# LETTER FROM F. PAUL WILSON  
662 Rolling Hills Ct.  
Brick, NJ 08724  
May 10, 1984

'Too bad I couldn't get those revisions on "Look ... Ma" to you in time. They would have reflected my change of mood since then when I was only hurt, disappointed and disgusted. I've since had the dubious pleasure of reading a few interviews with THE KEEP's director, the estimable Michael Mann, and the mood has changed to anger.

'He brags -- brags! -- of how he threw out all the gothic elements and did away with all explanations. Good move, Mike: You dumped the baby and kept the bathwater. Even in the hands of a more skilled screenwriter, THE KEEP would have been a trying project, what with five principals -- three human and two superhuman. Mann simply wasn't up to the task. He has demonstrated that he is merely a technician with no feeling for people, neither those on the screen nor those sitting before it.

'The film has no heart, no soul, no mind. See for yourself: Rent the videotape or catch it on "Showtime" soon. Theatres won't touch it.

'At least I have the satisfaction of seeing the book go on selling, passing the million mark despite the colossal failure of the movie -- "Entertainment Tonight" listed it as one of the top ten financial losers of 1983, and it made PLAYBOY's "Ten Worst" list. I'd like to take a certain grim satisfaction in that but it won't come.

'Someone quoted a best-selling author to me -- who shall remain nameless since the quote is hearsay -- to the effect that no author who signs over movie rights to one of his books has a right to complain if he doesn't like the result. Bullshit. That's like saying the parents who enrolled their children in Virginia McMartin's well-respected pre-school in Manhattan Beach, CA, have no right to be outraged after learning that the kids were being sexually abused by the staff.

If you're dealing with major studios and major bucks, you shouldn't have to see your work sodomized.

'But every mistake is a learning experience and this has certainly been one. To cop a phrase from the Jews: "Never again!" No matter what the offering price, I am going to have some say in the next movie. (Unless, of course, the offer is REALLY big.)

'But on to another matter. I noted with interest your review of NEXUS, the comic book. I haven't read that one, but for the first time in 20 years, I'm buying comic books again. By the time you read this, the 12th issue of Howard Chaykin's AMERICAN FLAGG will be out, thus wrapping up a year's run of the best SF comic I've ever seen. No kidding. Everyone, go out and buy these 12 issues. Usually you can glance at the pictures and skim the dialog -- zip! -- you've read a comic. Not AMERICAN FLAGG. You have got to read this sucker, and concentrate on what's going on in the backgrounds. I've never been impressed with Chaykin's artwork before, but he's really found himself here. By an ingenious use of graphics he manages to fill his panels with sound as well as sight. And on top of all that, it's a great story. I think I might nominate it for a Nebula.'

((You have the consolation of knowing that the failure of the movie version of THE KEEP is clearly the fault of the director and that fact is not lost on the moneymen of Hollywood. His career is damaged, not yours. Next time you may be listened to.))



# LETTER FROM ROY TACKETT  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
May 6, 1984

'How's your hammer hanging?

'Some thoughts on Charles Platt's "The Decline of Fiction." As with everything else these days there are only shades of grey. But on the whole I think what one sees depends upon where one looks. (Migod, what a profound statement. Let me write that down.) Let us also stick to our particular field and not get mired in the morass of

the mainstream. If we look back a few years we find there were relatively few fantasy and science fiction titles published and total sales of something above 10,000 copies were considered remarkable. Today the list of titles published is apparently endless and sales of more than 150,000 copies are considered routine.

'That still isn't very much when one considers the entire population but it must be remembered that most of the population prefers their fiction in visual form: movies and television. Written fiction has always been something to be avoided by the majority unless, of course, it is literature. Why everybody knows that fiction is trash and should be avoided with the exception of the stuff that is really trash and then it will sell five million copies or more. (Literature is to be avoided because it was all written 300 years ago and nobody understands it anyway.) Fantasy and science fiction with its roots deep in the pulps is not really trash but rather is absolute trash and should be avoided at all costs. Nobody sells five million copies -- except maybe Tolkien and he's dead so it must be literature.

'Let's consider what Platt says in his penultimate paragraph: "Either my tastes, and the tastes of other people I know have changed with age..." Yes. Key point. Fantasy and science fiction have always been, in the main, stories for younger people. Which is why the numbers do not change all that much. Every time a new young reader gets interested in the field an older one loses interest. (True, some of us stick around for years but a survey recently conducted by the Planetary Psychological Studies of the planet Hort revealed that mentally we never leave our teen years.) Our tastes do change with age -- or maybe they don't. Maybe it is the fiction which changes and our tastes have hardened to what they were when we were younger and the new stuff doesn't conform to our tastes.

'I know that my tastes in reading have changed over the years. I still read the sfzines, what there are of them, and simply shake my head over most of all those wonderful stories. If I find one yarn per issue that I figure was worth while reading I am impressed. Make a note of the writer's name.

'Geis, the trouble is that after all these years we know that stories are just stories meant as amusement for the most part. I won't disagree with Charles Platt that the deep statements about our relationship with technology have

appeared in novels. Not much of that sort of thing being done these days, though. Mostly it seems to be a lot of small-thinking writers whining about how tough the world is. So what else is new?

'Has fiction declined? Ask some of the younger types. They'll tell you how great this latest novel is.

'Charles Platt, like the rest of us, is finding that age is taking away his enthusiasm. If I was 40 years younger I'd probably enjoy a lot of todays stf.

'P.S. Maybe you need to get some teen-age reviewers and columnists.'

((It's a trade-off, I guess. The veteran sf reader may be jaded and more picky and jaundiced of eye, but he has perspective, better judgement and skills, as opposed to the gosh-wow enthusiasm of the new reader to whom it is all new and sparkling.))

#### # LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER

The Square House, Palmer St.  
S. Petherton, Somerset TA13  
5DB, England  
April 27, 1984

'BELIEVE IT OR NOT DEPARTMENT  
NOW OPEN.

'Dear Dick,

'Further to my "Noise Level"  
column about "Word Processors as  
Fortune-Telling Machines"...

'Yesterday I sat down to one  
of the last jobs I had to attend  
to because of the Brighton con: write  
letters of thanks to our GoHs.

'The reference that came up on  
the first letter (of five) was  
SCNAOB -- "Any other business?" --  
and the final one, for the last en-  
velope, was AOK.

'I like this machine of mine!

'Incidentally, it was quite  
right. The con was AOK. We al-  
ready had a note from Christopher  
Priest to tell us so. What a re-  
lief!"

#### # LETTER FROM CHET TWAROG

32 Tucker St, Pepperell, MA  
01437, May 8, 1984

'I'm trying again! Doug  
Fratz's letter in SFR #51 ticked me  
off again! Fundamentally, even  
(you) highly educated literates re-  
main factually illiterate terminol-

ogically. I've tried to communi-  
cate this to several SF and science  
writers but have been disappoint-  
ingly non-persuasive.

'Why, if we all know Earth ro-  
tates on its axis orbiting Sun,  
why, why do you (they) continue to  
write "sunrise/sunset, moonrise/  
set, Orion rising, etc."????? A  
matter of habit is not excusable!!!  
That implies Sun orbiting EARTH,  
or Moon, or Orion. The same goes  
for other planets, systems, etc.,  
space stations.

'The only dictionary I've found  
admitting "sunrise as the apparent  
(illusion) rising of the sun" is the  
Webster's New Collegiate Dictio-  
nary (1977). The others define it  
as "sun rising or coming up in  
the morning"! Awfully wrong. Fac-  
tually irrational.

'AND, I tire of reading "the  
earth, the sun, or the moon."  
They're supposed to be proper nouns  
(names) and written as "Earth, Moon  
or Sun" or change them to Terra,  
Luna and Sol.

'These are sorta reasons why  
I've tired of reading SF or enjoy  
it much less or cringe and gnaw/  
gnash my teeth whenever I hear  
someone like Dr. Sagan say "sunrise  
or the sun going down or up." I  
try distracting myself thinking,  
"Oh, primitives" but it is a poor  
excuse cause there ain't any. SF  
is supposed to be "progressive  
literature."

((Chet, this will drive you  
crazy. Accept that mankind is more  
at home being irrational in these  
matters. We are the center of the  
universe, emotionally, and to hell  
with the facts! When you live off  
Earth your perspective and orienta-  
tion will change. Then you'll  
have people talking about Earthrise  
and Earthset. You'll never win.))

#### # LETTER FROM ELTON T. ELLIOTT April 30, 1984

'I found Damon Knight's reply  
to Gregory Benford most illumina-  
ting. I've discovered the crucial  
connection between the radical fun-  
damentalists (a la Gary Greenwald)  
and the liberal meddlers (Mr.  
Knight). Both groups are convinced  
that mankind is in serious trouble,  
that the species as a whole is po-  
tentially doomed, unless -- of  
course -- humanity follows whatever  
prescription they have decided is  
correct to remedy the problem. You  
see, to them, the greatest heresy  
is the possibility that mankind

might, just possibly might have a  
glorious future, but you see that  
can't be the case because where  
would they fit in. Nobody's life  
to rule, the thought that today's  
problem, while very real and very  
deadly are merely nothing more than  
adolescent growth pains, it's too  
shocking to consider.

'Mr. Knight shows his true col-  
ors when he lumps laissez-faire  
capitalism together with racism, and  
goes on to say that hard SF writers  
right-wing bias makes their works  
philosophically shallow because they  
maintain that mankind has a glori-  
ous destiny in space. It's not  
surprising given the fact that Mr.  
Knight is against mankind going in-  
to space and has said so in public.  
You see he's concerned about over-  
population. When I asked him (at  
a panel at Orycon, Nov. 1983) how  
he would "cure" overpopulation he  
replied, "By education and persua-  
sion." Persuasion, sure, but what  
kind?

'If you're genuinely concerned  
about overpopulation and racism,  
Mr. Knight, consider true free mar-  
ket laissez-faire capitalism which  
according to black economist Thomas  
Sowell is "the best hope for mi-  
norities around the world," when it  
comes to economic advancement, and  
that all the do-gooder liberal med-  
dler programs have brought them  
nothing but "disaster."

'I think, Dick, that what we  
have here is philosophical prudery  
-- the idea that the human race is  
worth something and that someday  
some of us are going into space and  
we're going to have a lot of fun  
drives the liberal and conservative  
meddlers up the wall.

'Finally, back to the persua-  
sion part, I notice that one quar-  
rant of Mr. Benford's political  
spectrum is discreetly left blank  
of names. I suggest that those who  
lump laissez-faire capitalism in  
with racism and who advocate "ed-  
ucation and persuasion" to deal  
with overpopulation consider whether  
that is an appropriate area for  
their names to go.

'P.S. Damon Knight -- if this  
be demagoguery let us make the best  
of it.'

((Well, obviously if mankind  
escapes into space there's no hope  
of controlling him, "persuading"  
him, ruling him. The liberals  
and religionists fear space travel  
because it threatens their influ-  
ence and control of mankind and  
undermines their philosophical  
dogma and emotional investments  
and needs. The ultimate New  
Frontier means their loss of  
power and status. Any argument

will be used to frustrate the natural drive to outer space.))

# LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT  
9 Patchin Place, NY, NY 10011  
April 27, 1984

'Re your editorial: You are, in effect, denying that you are a member of society with obligations to your fellows. The purpose of taxation is to share the cost of essential public services that are of benefit to all of us. (Yes, I realize that in practice this operates inefficiently.) To me, property taxes seem a reasonable way of paying for local services. Such taxes should not be compared with rent, which is entirely a private transaction. Personally, I view rent as the price I pay for freedom from responsibility for the upkeep of my home, and I prefer it that way. But should people be able to "opt out" as you suggest, and drive off as nomads in motor homes? I rather wonder who will maintain the roads that they'll be driving over, and the sanitation facilities they will use, and the education for their children, and the hospitals when they get sick. It seems to me that the libertarian fantasy about total rugged individualism really is a fantasy: I have known very few people who are willing to accept all the disadvantages involved. I like to feel independent and self-sustaining myself, but I know, ultimately, I am dependent on the society I live in. And so are you.

((Of course I am, and admit it; it's a question of to what extent I should be forced to pay for the upkeep of others and the upkeep of the rulers and the upkeep of the infrastructure of our civilization.

((How much government do we really need? As much as we had in Revolutionary times? In 1920? In 1950? That's what it's all about. There's no end to the services that can be provided "free" to "worthy", "needful" minorities, and an increasing army of government employees will be happy to provide them, using shame, guilt and propaganda to pressure the taxpayers into sitting still for ever-higher taxes at every level of government.

((There is a burgeoning tax revolt in this country now, and it will get stronger and more powerful as time goes by. My intent is to live as independently as possible from the power of the state. Because the state is going to fuck up and I want a buffer against those inevitable disasters.))

'Now, to your contributors. Damon Knight's reply to Greg Benford reminds me of Damon's other lit-crit: it's very literal minded. I doubt that Greg was arguing that the most important task for science fiction is to get all its facts right; rather, he seemed to be suggesting that the core of science fiction should be a concern with scientific plausibility (which is something else again), and a belief in science as an essential and desirable component of present and future civilization. It makes little sense to quibble about whether Wells's anti-gravity material could have existed, or whether the Ring-world would be a stable astronomical body. This kind of nitpicking reminds me of my one experience at Milford, and I despise it, because its pettiness ignores the spirit and intent of the work. I don't want to speak on Greg's behalf, but it seems to me that in arguing the virtues of "hard" science fiction, he was not arguing for detailed, demonstrable treatises; he was arguing for an attitude that embraces the scientific method, at the same time that it may take a small liberty with it once in awhile.

'Re John Brunner's column: I really feel sorry for the Italians in Casalbordino Lido if, as he says, they like to keep the place for themselves, without tourists turning up and ruining it. There they were, minding their own business, when what happens? John Brunner wanders in, like something out of a Monty Python sketch. Can't you just see it, Brunner as John Cleese?

'Re Piers Anthony. I'm sorry that Piers has decided to say in public that he has some reservations about my profile of him. Everyone I profiled, including Piers, was given the chance to get and edit my work before publication. He asked for a few alterations, and I made them. I realize that he did not enjoy my "angle" on him, but then, we do not always like the way that others perceive us. I saw him as work-obsessed and time-obsessed, and I still do. I tried to convey this. I did not give much space to his theory about how to beat writer's block, because the topic seemed of narrow appeal.

'He did indeed write a funny mini-profile of me, using all my techniques against me, and lampooning my style. Like much of Piers' work, this piece suffered from being prolix and needing a rewrite, but it really was very funny. At first I thought it was also intended maliciously, which is why my initial response to him might have seemed unduly straight-faced. Also, Piers had given his consent to

being interviewed after having seen samples of the kind of profiles I write, but I had not given my consent to be "interviewed" by him.

'As for the rest of your letter column, the odd thing is that the people who write really nasty things about me are people whom I have never met, or even heard of. If I was a public figure, I suppose I could understand it; but I'm merely a part-time member of a bickering clique that shares some interest in a minor category of fiction. If as you say, I find it hard to take this seriously, this is hardly surprising.

'Two of your correspondents complain that I'm foolish to criticize interactive fiction on literary grounds, because it doesn't claim or aim to be literature. Yes, but I specifically pointed out in my column that, although interactive fiction is designed as kids' stuff right now, there are indications that it will not remain as such. Tom Disch, Joe Haldeman and Janet Morris have written, or are writing, multiple-choice narratives. These people are respected writers of adult science fiction. My column was discussing the trend that this implied, not the reality which exists right now. As for the correspondent who complained about hostility from people who read fiction, toward people who play games: Does he really not understand why this should be so? No doubt he's the kind of person who also complains about "literary elitism" on the part of some critics. But as I responded to Jack Chalker, who accused me of this on a convention panel, people who complain about "elitism" are usually complaining about the fact that other people have literary standards.'

# LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
113 Deepdale Rd.  
Stratford, PA 19087  
April 23, 1984

'There's a strange typo in the 1st paragraph of my review of DARK VALLEY DESTINY, where it says, "First not, well, maybe it's for the best." This makes little sense. It should read, "If not, etc." I have a theory that these errors are caused by the Illuminati, who communicate with one another this way, by means of a secret cypher.

((The secret cypher must therefore be narrow-beamed into Paulette's mind as she types your columns. I suspect a secret, alien mind-control

weapon transported in the secret underground tunnels used formerly by the deros and teros.))

'Charles Platt draws too many conclusions from the shift to non-fiction in TWILIGHT ZONE. The hard facts of the matter, proven by the demise of every large-sized SF or fantasy magazine (and the forced reversion of ANALOG to digest size in 1965), are that an SF magazine in an 8 1/2 X 11 format is for purposes of newsstand display in this country (this is less true elsewhere), either a movie magazine or a comic book. We found out the hard way with ASIMOV'S ADVENTURE that comic book buyers just cannot handle a page of solid text. They will not buy a fiction magazine. Movie magazine buyers are more literate, but their interests are specialized. By disguising TWILIGHT ZONE as a movie magazine, Klein has assured its survival. I am sure some of his readers all but skip the fiction. But their money is still good, and the original, virtually all-fiction TWILIGHT ZONE magazine just didn't make it.

'Ted White and I argue about this once or twice a year. He thinks AMAZING should go to a large format. I think it would die in two or three issues that way. Comic book readers won't buy it, and it doesn't have a strong movie tie-in.'

((The conclusion is, I suppose, that magazine fiction is dead/dying, and that only in books is fiction surviving/thriving. This suggests starkly different readerships: different people haunt the magazine racks than haunt the book racks.))



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**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #40** Interview with Robert Shekley; 4-way conversation: Arthur C. Clarke, Harlan Ellison, Fritz Leiber & Mark Wells; "The Engines of the Night"--Part Three by Barry N. Malzberg; Darrell Schweitzer; SF News by Elton T. Elliott

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**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19** Inter-  
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